HGTV show helps promote Saipan. » PAGE 2

Federal court's Drug Court convenes. » PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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CASINO COMMISSION TELLS BSI:

'Review visas of construction workers'

» Casino commission also reviews financial strategies of Best Sunshine

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Casino Commission has tasked Saipan casino owners to revisit contracts with their contractors and subcontractors, in light of rumors circulating of employees working at the casino's construction site who may have "questionable immigration status."

"We are now directing Imperial Pacific to revisit contract agreements with sub-contractors to demand that they demand all employees must be legally authorized to work," casino commission executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero said, alluding to recent reports of tourist visa abuse by businesses in the Commonwealth that seek to hire these "tourists" to continue or move forward with their hotel, restaurant, or construction projects.

At the same time, the Saipan casino's—or Best Sunshine, Ltd.'s—projected construction costs for their Grand Mariana casino resort in the heart of Garapan is now estimated

See VISAS on Page 4

Ogumoro found guilty of 7 corruption charges

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Former Department of Public Safety deputy commissioner Ambrosio T. Ogumoro, third from right, emerges from the courtroom with family members, supporters, and friends after Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman announced his verdict. Wiseman found Ogumoro guilty of seven of nine corruption charges over his role in the shielding of then-Attorney General Edward Buckingham from being served with penal summons in August 2012.

» Judge says testimonies of govt witnesses credible, but not Ogumoro's

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman announced yesterday his verdict finding former Department of Public Safety deputy commissioner Ambrosio T. Ogumoro guilty of seven of nine corruption charges for his role in the shielding of then-Attorney

See OGUMORO on Page 4

PCF MARIANAS CHAPTER CLASS OF 2015

Demapan follows brother's footsteps

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

John DLG Demapan and 11 of his classmates' journey does not end in receiving their Pacific Century Fellows diploma. It is only the beginning.

Demapan was part of the 2015 graduating class of the PCF's Marianas Chapter following the footsteps of his brother, Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan), who is part of the PCF Class 2014.

He and 11 others received their diplomas in a simple graduation ceremony for the 2015 Class last night at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall.

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority dispatcher said he did not let his disability stop him from finishing the program that has taught him how to further help the

See DEMAPAN on Page 4

JON PEREZ

Members of the Pacific Century Fellows Marianas Chapter program's graduating class of 2015 listen as House Speaker Rafael Demapan reads a House Resolution honoring their achievement.

INSIDE

LOCAL

The Saipan Marianas Lions Club and its youth counterpart, the Saipan Marianas Alpha Leos Club, have adopted three school bus stops.

» PAGE 6

NATION

The nation's capital and its largest city both got walloped by the same near-record blizzard this weekend.

» PAGE 14

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Local

HGTV show helps promote Saipan

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

HGTV cable channel has featured Saipan on the latest episode of its series, *Beachfront Bargain Hunt*, which follows homebuyers who are looking for a beachfront home that fits their budget.

In the episode, former San Diego, California residents Jeff and Ginger Carlucci enjoy the beach life and were looking for a beachfront property that goes within their budget of $275,000. They decided to move to Saipan where they hope to start a barbecue food trailer business.

Local real estate agent Tim Goodwin, who helped the couple find their dream home, said the Carluccis had already been staying on Saipan for more than two years when producers of the show got in touch with him.

Goodwin said that producers of the show from New York got in touch with him in October 2014 and did a Skype interview if it's okay for him to recreate the Carluccis' search of their home. The producers approved to do the show in December 2014 and filming started in March.

The Carluccis have been to the Carribean, the Carolina Coast, and Mexico and had heard about Saipan so they went here to check things out.

"The premise of the show has always been that there's either a U.S. couple, family or an individual that are looking to buy a property that is under $350,000. Usually, their age range is under 45," Goodwin said.

"We just recreated the whole thing where they checked three different houses, talked about beach living and its amenities. At the end of the episode, they would show the house after the couple had settled in," added Goodwin, who is the owner and operator of Pacific Rim International.

The HGTV crew came to Saipan in March to film the episode. The filming was supposed to last for only three days but the crew stayed to continue filming for one more day as Typhoon Bavi hit Saipan.

Goodwin, however, said that the property the Carluccis bought is again for sale after they had already left Saipan to go back to San Diego as Jeff

See HGTV on Page 4

HGTV TWITTER

A combination shot from the HGTV series *Beachfront Bargain Hunter* features, clockwise from bottom left, Jeff and Ginger Carlucci, the Grotto, Saipan map, and one of the houses.

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Federal court's Drug Court convenes

»Ex-CBP officer, ex-cop among the first 4 applicants

The U.S. District Court for the NMI's Drug Court convened for the first time yesterday with four applicants.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona presided over the session for applicants who are all federal probationers—former U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer Bob Hajime Deleon Guerrero Yamagishi, former police officer Florencio Q. Richards, Vicente Aldan Sablan, and Francisco Nakatsukasa Basa.

Manglona explained to the probationers that their application to the Drug Court is voluntary.

Manglona called the applicants in front one by one and asked them questions. Other members of the Drug Court panel asked questions and provided "positive" information as well about the applicants.

The judge expressed hope that the applicants will be the Drug Court's first success story.

After the session, Manglona and other members of the panel gave rounds of applause to the applicants.

Manglona said the Drug Court will reconvene after a month and asked the applicants to attend.

Sitting beside Manglona was U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather Kennedy. Among those sitting in the panel were U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and NMI Alicia A. G. Limtiaco, U.S. probation officers Margarita Wonenberg, Gregory Arriola, and Juanette David-Atalig, and attorneys Robert Torres and David Banes.

The Federal Reentry/Drug Court is a post-incarceration cooperative effort program of the U.S. District Courts, U.S. Probation Office, Federal Public Defender, and U.S. Attorney's Office.

The federal Drug Court provides treatment and sanctions alternatives to address re-integration into the community for non-violent, substance abuse offenders released from federal prison.

The Superior Court is also creating its Drug Court. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Bill to allow minors to transit through casino introduced

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Another bill to amend the casino law was introduced during a House session yesterday. This time the amendment is to allow those under the age of 21 to transit through the Saipan casino, as current enforcement of smoking enclosures in the T-Galleria mall have reportedly forced tourists "to go around" the casino by stepping outside.

"That bill intends to allow those minors to go through the casino floor along with parents," House Speaker Rafael Demapan (R-Saipan), the bill's author, told reporters yesterday. "Right now, for them to go through they would have to go outside DFS and by doing that, as DFS is very close to the roads" there are safety concerns.

With the bill in effect there will be "a designated pathway for those kids who are less than 21 for them to walk to one place to another," said Demapan.

The bill's purpose is for "the safety of the kids and that's basically it," he added, calling it "tourist-friendly." "To my understanding, it is also been requested by DFS."

"Demapan's bill states that between 2,500 to 3,000 people are affected by the current regulation, directly or indirectly, to bar individuals under 21 years of age except for employees from the gaming areas of the casino.

The bill looks to gaming areas in Nevada and Colorado, where those under 21 are allowed to be present in gaming area for the sole purpose of making their way through, "as long as these individuals do not loiter or gamble."

The bill argues the practice should also be adopted by the Commonwealth to help tourists avoid the unpleasant experience of heavy traffic, and ease strain on tour operators who must supervise these groups—who may have to be split, if minors have to go around the mall, the bill states.

"…One lone supervisor cannot supervise both adults and the minors," the bill states.

"The CNMI can ill afford to inconvenience any tourists, particularly those with young adults and children," it adds. "…Finally, we cannot and should not wait for a traffic accident to occur before we take remedial measures."

BECQ holds workshop on EPA's Revised Total Coliform Rule

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality held a workshop for the public water systems in the Commonwealth at Saipan World Resort yesterday.

BECQ's Safe Drinking Water Program hosted the Public Water System workshop to discuss the new rule established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency which will be implemented this year.

"There's a new rule that EPA had implemented, the Revised Total Coliform Rule, which changes how the public water system is monitored. It's coming into effect April 1st of 2016," SDWP branch manager Joe Kaipat said.

"We wanted to make the public water systems know. We have over 100 public water systems," he added.

EPA published the Revised Total Coliform Rule in 2013, which revises the 1989 Total Coliform Rule and is intended to improve public health protection.

According to Anna Yen of USEPA Region IX Drinking Water Program, EPA made improvements in the rule using E. Coli as a better measurement of whether there is microbial contamination in the system.

"It's still the same rule in general in its intent that is to protect water systems from pathogenic microbes, and it verifies there's system integrity that contamination hasn't gone into the system," Yen said.

"The Revised Total Coliform Rule made improvements to the current rule. Its improvements had to do with looking at E. Coli as a better measurement of whether there is contamination in the water system whereas before there were different kinds of maximum contaminant levels. When you exceed the maximum contaminant levels then you have a violation. In the revised rule, they changed it to just one type of violation and it's based on E. Coli," she added.

Yen added that this is because total coliform is not necessarily and indicator that one has contamination in the system that could impact public health.

"Because there is only a very small portion of coliform that is pathogenic, that's disease-causing," Yen said, "EPA determined that it's better to use that just as an indicator. If you have that, then that triggers other actions that you should take."

Aside from the RTCR, Phase II-V monitoring, lead and copper rule, and consumer confidence report, among others were also discussed.

Various concerned agencies and establishments attended the workshop such as the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., water companies, and hotels.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION TO BID
CUC-ITB-16-004

SURVEYED VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is inviting interested individuals and firms to bid on CUC Surveyed Vehicles & Equipment located in Saipan & Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Bid Package may be obtained at no charge upon registration at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

One (1) original and One (1) copy must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-ITB-16-004, CUC Surveyed Vehicles & Equipment**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 26, 2016,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bidders must sign a Waiver of Liability, removing CUC's liability from claims resulting from violations relating to the removal and disposal of the surveyed vehicles & equipment. CUC shall transfer and assign the surveyed vehicles/equipment to the prospective bidder in an "**As is, Where is**" condition. By accepting the transfer and assignment, the bidder acknowledges that CUC has made no representation or warranties of the merchantability, quality, fitness, and condition of the vehicles/equipment.

The vehicles/equipment may be inspected by appointment only, between the hours of 9:00 AM thru 3:00 PM Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, by contacting CUC Procurement & Supply Division at telephone no. 664-4282 extensions 367 & 305. For the vehicles on Tinian, please contact Winston Omar at 433-9261 or 433-3488.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in the best interest of the CUC.

All inquiries must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 19, 2016, to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC Administrative Technician for Procurement via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Acting Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

SEALED BIDS for construction of a Brown Tree Snake (BTS) Containment Barrier at the Tinian International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Project No. CPA-TA-002-13 will be received at the office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP, 96950.

All Bids shall be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: Tinian International Airport Brown Tree Snake Containment Barrier Construction, Project No. CPA-TA-002-13 and must be submitted no later than **2:00 PM on FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2016** to the Office of the Executive Director at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the sealed Bids will be publicly opened and read.

The Project, in general, consists of, but is not limited to, construction of a 40' x 40' concrete containment barrier, inclusive of masonry work, touch up painting, electrical connection to existing panel, lighting and power, bituminous pavement, all in accordance with the Project Drawings and Specifications.

The Project is being financed by funds from the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA). The Contract award, if it is made, will be made within sixty (60) calendar days of the receipt of Bid Proposals. CPA reserves the right to hold such Bids in effect for ninety (90) calendar days from the date of Bid opening.

The Contract period for construction of the Project in its entirety shall be one hundred twenty (120) calendar days. Liquidated damages in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars ($150.00) shall be assessed the Contractor for each calendar day completion of the Project is delayed beyond the Contract completion date without approved excuse.

The apparent low Bidder may be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." The review will include, but is not necessarily limited to, previous projects experience, financial capability, quantity and quality of equipment and personnel, and ability to secure bonding and insurance. If the apparent low Bidder is found to be not "responsive and responsible", their Bid will be rejected and the next lowest Bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

All mechanics and laborers on the Project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by CNMI Law or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. The Contractor shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract. A copy of the CNMI Minimum Wage Rate Determination is included in the General Provisions, Section 70-25.

The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the Specifications. Bid Proposal documents are available for inspection at the Commonwealth Ports Authority office at no cost.

Each Bidder must complete, sign, and furnish the "Bidder's Statement on Previous Contracts Subject to EEO Clause", a "Certification of Non-Segregated Facilities", and the "Assurance of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises Participation", as contained in the Bid Proposal documents, with submission of their Bid Proposal.

A CD-Rom containing the Bid Proposal and Contract Documents, including Drawings and Specifications, may be obtained at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, upon payment of **ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS ($100.00)** for each set of documents in electronic form, including the Bid Schedule. The payment is nonrefundable. Payment shall be made in cash, cashier's check or U.S. Postal money order made payable to the "Commonwealth Ports Authority".

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the Tinian International Airport, at **10:00 AM, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2016** to explain and clarify any questions regarding this Project. Attendance of the Pre-Bid Conference is mandatory. Questions should be submitted to the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference date.

Bid Proposals shall be submitted on the Bid Proposal form included in the CD-Rom obtained from the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all Bids submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding Bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the Bid Schedule or mis-entry of the quantity of line items; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the Project Contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said Bids if, in its sole opinion, to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

The proposed Contract is under and subject to Executive Order 11246, as amended by Executive Order 11375, dated October 13, 1977, and Section 60-1.4(b) of the Regulations of the Secretary of Labor (41 CFR 60-1) as implemented by Section 152.61 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, and to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Federal Labor provisions.

Each Bidder must supply all information required by the Bid documents and Specifications.

A Contractor having 50 or more employees and any subcontractor having 50 or more employees and who may be awarded a contract of Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00) or more, will be required to maintain an affirmative action program, the standards for which are contained in the Specifications. To be eligible for award, each Bidder must comply with the affirmative action requirements.

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit Bids in response to this Invitation and will not be discriminated against, on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, in consideration for an award of any Contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement.

Women will be afforded equal opportunity in all areas of employment. However, the employment of women shall not diminish the standards or requirements for employment of minorities.

Each Bid shall be accompanied by either a Bid Bond issued by a U.S. Treasury listed surety company, Certified Check, or a Cashier's Check in an amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the Bid amount. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The proposed Contract is under and subject to the foreign trade restrictions required by 49 CFR Part 30, Denial of Public Works Contracts to Supplier of Goods and Services of Countries that Deny Procurement Market Access to U.S. Contractors.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/S/ JOSE R. LIFOIFOI
Board Chairman/Contracting Officer

Date: January 22, 2016

VISAS

From Page 1

to cost about $550 million, taking into account additional costs for sewer pipeline and traffic design and construction they will shoulder for projects nearby and outside their construction grounds.

"Close to $180 million" has already been spent on the Saipan casino project, according to Guerrero. The casino originally raised a first batch of $100 million and then $200 million for a total of $300 million, with the $180 spent toward the casino's "temporary" gaming facility in the T-Galleria mall and the construction of Grand Mariana.

The casino will feature about 374 rooms, seven restaurants, among numerous slot machines and gaming tables in their casino facility. Best Sunshine currently has 815 employees, with over 65 percent local and U.S. workers and potential to expand to go to 3,500 to 4,000 employees with the Grand Mariana.

"They have a significant amount of that $300 million still in their balance sheet," said Guerrero. "The gap or the difference to the $550 million is why we asked to them explain how that is to be raised and when. We are comfortable with what we heard," he said, adding that have asked for additional documents and also discussed the intimate financial details of funding parties in executive session during a commission meeting on Friday.

Best Sunshine has provided a report on "where they're funding sources" are, and have submitted an annual report for 2014 to 2015, said Guerrero. Hong Kong-based and island-based officials met with the commission last Friday to provide and explain this documentation.

"The $500 million was explained in detail so we are comfortable that they are able to do it," he said. "They are also assuming a lot of the costs associated with traffic movement in Garapan inclusive of laying of the sewage treatment pipe" two miles down to a treatment plant in Sadog Tasi.

"They will be taking care of that," he added. "Originally, it was $500 million but now they are looking at perhaps $550 million

"From what we heard, we are confident that Imperial Pacific is in a good position financially and otherwise as earlier envisioned and as improved by CNMI regulatory agencies," said Guerrero.

Timeline and earnings

The casino's lease for a "temporary" casino in T-Galleria is good for about 18 months, which the commission takes to mean that the Grand Mariana—at least for casino gaming—should be up and running on or before but not to exceed April 2017.

"Whether the entire facility is done, we don't know," Guerrero added. "But at least the gaming portion should be up and operating and should be out of the T-Galleria."

Guerrero also provided an industry standard formula—without disclosing the results—to assess the casino's revenue projections and how much taxes have been paid out. The formula multiplies the casino's average rolling chip volume value per month with 2.8 percent—or the standard house "hold" or share—and multiplies this value with 5 percent, or the maximum percentage of business gross revenue tax, which the casino pays out.

As December rolling chip volume was reported to be $1.44 billion and $1.6 billion in November, the casino's tax payout would be substantial.

"That is what we are about to report to the government," said Guerrero, "as to our projections on what this industry may be raising in the fiscal year 2016."

Guerrero expressed surprise at the casino's earnings "for such a small facility, with only four VIP rooms, and the fourth one only added in recent weeks.

"The volume of rolling chip activity that is $1.6 billion in November. That volume in a very small facility, where there is no hotel, where it is in a mall, is unheard of," Guerrero said. "That has been bringing some serious attention to this little island of Saipan. From what we've been hearing from other contacts, investors are taking a second look into Imperial Pacific.

The Saipan casino believes this is comparable to Macau gaming on the scale it is now.

OGUMORO

From Page 1

General Edward Buckingham from being served with penal summons in August 2012.

Wiseman found the testimony of Ogumoro not credible. He found credible the testimonies of then-Office of the Public Auditor investigator Juanette David-Atalig, Police Officer Juan Mendiola, and other government witnesses.

Wiseman found Ogumoro guilty of five counts of misconduct in public office, one count of obstructing justice: Interference with a law enforcement officer or witness, and one count of criminal coercion.

The judge, however, dismissed with prejudice the charges of conspiracy to commit obstructing justice: Interference with a law enforcement officer or witness, and misconduct in public office.

Dismiss with prejudice means the government cannot re-file the charges anymore.

Ogumoro, 57, remained calm when Wiseman read his verdict.

Sentencing will be on March 23, 2016 at 1:30pm.

On Friday, a Superior Court jury rendered a unanimous verdict finding Ogumoro guilty of conspiracy to commit theft of servicers and theft of services pertaining to the same incident of shielding of Buckingham.

Attorney Edward Arriola, counsel for Ogumoro, refused to comment about the verdict.

Special prosecutor George L. Hasselback, counsel for the government, in an interview said they are very pleased with the judge's verdict.

"We think it was well supported by the evidence," said Hasselback, who was supported by OPA legal counsel Ashley Kost during the four-day trial.

Hasselback said he has not decided on the recommendation of sentencing.

"My approach is take it a step at a time. I will take a look at the facts that were established, take a look at the court's order. The court issued a 12-page order, made a lot of factual findings in there," he said.

As to the question of what is the maximum penalty of all charges, Hasselback said majority are misdemeanors.

He said there is one felony, which is the criminal coercion, but it doesn't have enough threshold of potential punishment for the jury to decide.

"It has to be at least five years and $2,000 potential penalty. The criminal coercion comes with potential of up to two years," he said.

Hasselback said misconduct in public office each carries a potential of up to one-year imprisonment and a $1,000 fine.

With the conviction of Ogumoro, Hasselback said if not closed, the case certainly is coming to an end.

"There are always things that can happen. I don't want to predict anything down the road. It certainly is closing a major chapter on this," he said.

As to five counts of misconduct in public office, Wiseman said testimony at trial, including Ogumoro's own testimony, established that defendant was a public official acting in his official capacity during the events that took place between Aug. 3 and 4, 2012.

Wiseman said the government met its burden to prove all the elements of five counts of misconduct in public office.

In count 13 charging defendant with one count of misconduct in public office, Wiseman said the government's burden is to show that Ogumoro willfully neglected to execute his duty to diligently serve a penal summons.

Wiseman said Mendiola and David-Atalig testified that defendant instructed several police officers who were participating in the OPA's efforts to serve a penal summons to Buckingham to cease further assistance.

"This act evinces a lack of diligent effort to serve a penal summons issued by a court of law," said Wiseman, adding that he finds that Mendiola's and David-Atalig's testimonies were credible.

Wiseman said Ogumoro testified that he was not aware that a penal summons was issued against Buckingham.

Wiseman said he does not find Ogumoro's testimony credible in light of the many cell phone communications between him, then-governor Benigno R. Fitial, and Buckingham.

The judge noted that at least one text message from Buckingham to then-deputy attorney general Gilbert Birnbrich sent during the afternoon of Aug. 3, 2012, referenced an order to not accept a penal summons on his behalf.

On obstructing justice: Interference with a law enforcement officer or witness, Wiseman said the government met its burden to show that Ogumoro unlawfully interfered with a law enforcement officer because it showed that he unlawfully interfered with David-Atalig's efforts to serve a penal summons to Buckingham.

Wiseman said Mendiola testified that defendant instructed him to tell Police Officer Peter Camacho to inform David-Atalig to cease her operation to serve a penal summons to Buckingham or that she would be arrested.

Wiseman said he finds that Mendiola's testimony credible.

He said Mendiola and David-Atalig also testified that defendant instructed several police officers who were participating in the OPA operation to cease assisting David-Atalig.

Wiseman said he finds that Mendiola and Atalig's testimonies were credible.

Ogumoro testified to the contrary, explaining that he instructed the officers to cease assistance to David-Atalig because they were not in compliance with joint operation protocol—and that he did not threaten arrest of David-Atalig.

However, Wiseman said, he finds Ogumoro's statements were not credible.

Wiseman said he finds that David-Atalig's attempts to serve Buckingham with a penal summons were in the course of her law enforcement duties.

On criminal coercion, Wiseman said the government met its burden to show that defendant made a demand to intentionally compel another person to abstain from conduct that David-Atalig had a legal right to engage in.

The judge said Mendiola, who was a patrol shift supervisor during the events of Aug. 3 and 4, 2012, testified that he received an order from Ogumoro to inform Camacho to tell the victim, David-Atalig, to cease her operation to serve Buckingham a penal summons—or she'll be arrested.

Wiseman said Camacho's testimony supports Mendiola's testimony and the court finds these testimonies credible.

Wiseman said testimony from police detective Elias Q. Saralu shows that Ogumoro had a keen interest in and guided the course of events during the night of Aug. 3, 2012 and the early morning of Aug. 4, 2012.

Wiseman finds Saralu's testimony to be credible.

In this regard, the judge said, Ogumoro's countervailing testimony that he had limited knowledge of the penal summons or that he did not indirectly threaten David-Atalig with arrest is not credible.

Wiseman said the government also provided that the means Ogumoro took to coerce David-Ataig into compliance instilled fear in her.

Wiseman said David-Atalig testified that she feared that she would be arrested by fellow law enforcement officers—and that she was fearful because an arrest would impact her career opportunities.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

DEMAPAN

From Page 1

community.

"It has been a fulfilling journey to be part of the program and I thanked my family for being with me every step of the way and for their support in believing in me," Demapan said. "I thank my boss, Alfreda Camacho, for being an inspiration. Now I want to become an inspiration for others."

He now encourages other members of the community, especially the youth, to rise up to the challenge and be part of the program. "If they feel that they have what it takes to become a leader, I encourage them to join and make changes in the community. Especially those who have the potential to become leaders of our community."

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, the guest speaker, said that he is inviting all members of past classes and the current graduates for a dialogue to discuss plans on how to help the community.

"Everyone of us come from different walks of life. The opportunity you have, I also wanted that. I would like to host an open discussion with everyone of you, a simple discussion and consultation on how to find answers and solutions that could help our community," said Torres.

PCF Marianas Chapter chair Jerry Tan said the CNMI needs strong leaders who have vision. "We only take an average of 15 every year. The CNMI really needs a strong leader with vision and has been living long here. For the CNMI to have a bright future we need to groom new ones."

PCF founder and former Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann said the program brings together a group of professionals who wanted to make a difference.

"There are a few times in my life that I do speeches. I hardly spoke and always humbled if people give me credit. But life is all about bringing people together, sharing your ideas and then sit back and relax to see the fruits of your labor."

Rosalia M. Aldan, Amanda A. Dunn, Edward A. Arriola Jr., Natalie Mable Ayuyu, Alex A. Camacho, Luis John DLG Castro, Michael L. Ernest, Jonathan V. Liwag, Judy O. Mendieta, Jaclyn T. Mendiola and Mark O. Rabauliman are the other members of the PCF Marianas Chapter 2015 class.

HGTV

From Page 2

had to take care of his ailing mother.

"So far, I had already received two emails from the U.S. inquiring about properties here on Saipan. These are people who are retirees," said Goodwin, who added that he decided to do the show in order to showcase the beauty of Saipan.

"I have no other reason at all. All I did was have fun but what I wanted was to show the beauty of the island with views of the Banzai Cliff, Managaha, Bird Island, Grotto, and other sites. I want to let the people know that Saipan is the USA's best kept secret," Goodwin said.

He said that his target marker is really in Asia like Chinese, Japanese and Koreans. "The people from the U.S. are a different market. Mostly the people from the U.S. who come here and ask about houses are going to work in the government."

The episode already aired last week but will be re-aired this weekend and Feb. 6.

CUC board abolishes public information office

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The board of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has abolished its public information office.

After their executive session during the reconvening of the board last Monday, the board voted to abolish the position currently occupied by public information officer Brad Ruszala.

The motion to remove the position was carried after a 4-1 vote by the board. Chair Adelina Roberto, vice chair Eric San Nicolas, and directors Alberto Taitano and Diego Songao voted yes to the abolishment.

Directors Joe Torres and Chris Concepcion weren't present in the meeting that afternoon.

Only director David Sablan voted no to the motion.

Sablan said he objected to the motion because he wanted to have more information on why the position was being removed.

Sablan said other members of the board only said that the position was "not needed."

"If it's really unnecessary then I want to know why," Sablan said.

Ruszala

"There was no justification," he added.

The PIO position was filled last year after the board said it needed it. Ruszala was then hired by CUC last April.

"What changed?" Sablan said.

Sablan noted that the public information position played an important role especially during the recovery phase after Typhoon Soudelor.

He also noted that the position, which was deemed to be redundant by other members, is not something that they could establish again after abolishing it.

Sablan said there was also no discussion on budget issues regarding the said position.

With the abolishment of the office, the responsibility of disseminating information to the public is now with the office of the executive director.

Aside from the administrative responsibilities, the said office will now be responsible in getting information from various divisions of CUC, write press releases, and be available to the media, according to Sablan.

Currently, Gary Camacho is serving CUC as the acting executive director.

Sablan said members of the board asked Camacho if he can handle the added responsibilities.

Saipan Tribune tried to get Camacho's comment on the issue yesterday afternoon but was unable to reach him despite repeated phone calls. An email was not responded to as of press time.

Roberto also declined to speak on the matter when reached for comments.

In an interview, Ruszala told *Saipan Tribune* that no one informed him that his position was removed. He still reported for work yesterday.

"It is an honor and a privilege to serve the people of the Commonwealth and I appreciated the opportunity that was given when I was hired last year. I hope to continue doing so in the future," Ruszala said.

Probable cause found to charge stabbing suspect

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho yesterday found probable cause to warrant the filing of charges against Sheryl Lynn Muna Worswick over the stabbing of a cashier at a store across in San Antonio.

Worswick

Camacho found probable cause to believe that the crimes of attempted robbery, aggravated assault and battery, assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace were committed and that the 38-year-old Worswick may have committed the offenses.

Worswick, also known as Cheryl Lynn Muna Worswick, was ordered to answer the charges.

Arraignment will be on Feb. 1 at 9am. The defendant was remanded into the custody of the Department of Corrections, where she has been detained for failing to post a $25,000 cash bail.

At yesterday's preliminary hearing, assistant attorney general Barbara Cepeda called to the witness stand police detective Catherine B. Pangelinan, who testified the circumstances that led to the identification and arrest of the defendant.

Chief public defender Douglas Hartig served as counsel for Worswick.

The victim, a 52-year-old woman, received 15 stitches to the right hand. She was treated at the Commonwealth Health Center and later released.

Pangelinan stated in her report that the stabbing happened during Worswick's attempt to rob Islander Mini Mart/Western Union located along Beach Road east of the Pacific Islands shortly before noon last Jan. 17.

According to the cashier, while she was behind the cashier counter doing transaction with a Western Union customer, the suspect came in and asked her what time it was.

About five minutes later, the suspect, who was later identified through surveillance camera as Worswick came back armed with a knife and locked the front door.

A struggle later ensued, causing injuries to the cashier. Worswick ran away. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW-16-IFB-003

APPLICATION OF ANTI-SKID AT DANDAN ROAD BETWEEN THE LOOP OF KAMMA PLACE, SAIPAN, CNMI

Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Application of Anti-Skid at Dandan Road between the Loop of Kamma Place, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **January 27, 2016** at Departmnet of Public works, Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan. All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Deaprtment of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capital Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **February 12, 2016**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **February 26, 2016** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the preopective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828/9838 no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked "DPW-16-FB-003". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time **March 9, 2016**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time **March 9, 2016**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **March 9, 2016** and must be received no later than **March 18, 2016**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, March 21, 2016. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:30 a.m. local time, on March 9, 2016.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety requiring approval of the Attorney General must be pre-approved prior to bid submission.** Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations **§70-30.3-245.** The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

1) Cash
2) US Gov't Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **Thirty (30) calendar days** upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed at the rate of **One Hundred Fifty Dollars (US$150.00)** for each and every day the work is delayed beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

PETER P. CAMACHO
Acting Secretary of Public Works

HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply

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Following Information/Documents Required
Property Map/As Built Map/ Total Land Area
If available for existing building showing
exact location & building details
Owner Title Information
Owner Asking Price

Sex offender seeks disqualification of judge

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sex offender Ivan Castro wants Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho to be disqualified from presiding over his case charging him for failure to update the Department of Public Safety Sex Offender Registry Section about his verification information and for having contact with minor children.

Castro, through counsel assistant public defender Tillman Clark, disclosed yesterday that Camacho, as a then-practicing attorney, represented Angel Santos, a co-defendant to Castro in a prior criminal case.

Camacho set a hearing for Castro's motion to recuse for Feb. 24 at 9am.

The bench trial for Castro was set for Feb. 29 before Camacho.

In defendant's motion to recuse, Clark said Santos took a position that placed him in an adverse position to Castro by agreeing to testify against Castro.

"As such, Judge Camacho was placed in a position as an attorney where it would be required to gather information and attack the background, character, and acts of Mr. Castro for the purposes of defending Mr. Santos," Clark said.

»OAG has yet to re-file charges vs 3 men over 2010 rape of student

This, the defense lawyer said, creates a situation in which Camacho has likely previously gathered an extra-judicial knowledge of Castro as it pertains to previous criminal allegations and his alleged involvement for the purposes of cross examination and argument.

"This would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the judge's impartiality might be questioned in the current matter," Clark said.

The defense lawyer said if the court denies their motion to recuse on its face, they alternatively request an evidentiary hearing on the matter.

Santos and Castro were among the four men charged before over the kidnapping of a student in Kagman on June 15, 2010 and raping her at Tank Beach.

Santos and his then-counsel Camacho signed a plea deal with the government. Santos pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit sexual assault in the first degree.

In June 2011, Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman sentenced Santos to 15 years in prison.

According to Santos, he only served as a lookout as it was his co-defendants Castro, Joseph Camacho Jr., and Alfred P. Hocog who abducted and then raped the victim.

In December 2010, Wiseman dismissed without prejudice the charges against Castro, Joseph Camacho Jr., and Hocog, at the request of the Office of the Attorney General, after the results of a DNA test turned up inconclusive.

As of yesterday, the government has yet to re-file charges against Castro and the two co-defendants.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport
Car Rental Concessions
CPA-RFP-011-16

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) Rental Car Concessions at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.

Proposal packages can be obtained beginning January 15, 2016 at the CPA Administration Office, second floor of Arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport at a fee of $50.00 per package.

Proposal must be addressed to the Executive Director, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and received by the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) on **February 8, 2016**, by or before **12:00 p.m.**, in order to be considered for the award.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject proposals in accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations.

/s/ MARYANN Q. LIZAMA
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

Tinian International Airport
Car Rental Concessions
CPA-RFP-012-16

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting proposals for the award of three (3) Rental Car Concessions at the Tinian International Airport.

Proposal packages can be obtained beginning January 15, 2016 at the CPA Administration Office, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport at a fee of $50.00 per package.

Proposals must be addressed to the Executive Director, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and received by the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) on **February 8, 2016**, by or **before 12:00 p.m.**, in order to be considered for the award.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject proposals in accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations.

/s/ MARYANN Q. LIZAMA
Executive Director

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF GUAM, Plaintiff, vs. KIM EUGENE FORRESTER Defendant.] CIVIL ACTION] NO. 14-0223] NOTICE OF AUCTION and] JUDICIAL SALE OF] DEFENDANT'S REMAINING] LEASEHOLD INTEREST ON] THE MORTGAGED] PROPERTY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that under and by virtue of a judgment made and entered in the above titled action on the 2nd day of April, 2015, by the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to satisfy the amount found and adjudged due Plaintiff in the above titled action from Defendant, as prescribed in the Order Granting Motion for Order of Judicial Sale of Leasehold Interest of Mortgaged Property, the undersigned counsel or his designee will sell at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the **3rd day of February, 2016 at 10 a.m.,** at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, Saipan, the premises and real estate, lying and being on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, described in said judgment, to wit:

Lot 541 NEW-3-1. (a consolidation of Lot 541 New-2 and part of Lot 541 New-R2, formerly part of Lot 541 NEW-REM, part of Lot 541 NEW, which was part of Original Lot 541, TD 162) as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2203/91 the original of which was recorded 29 AUG 1991 as Documented No. 91-3913 at Commonwealth Recorder's, Saipan.

Terms and Conditions of Sale.

1. Rights and duties of Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer or his designee shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale:
   a) withdraw the property listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted.
   b) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
   c) to reject any and all bids.
2. Bids. Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in the notice. Such bids shall not be binding, except that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the property. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 670-234-7859; Fax: 670-234-5749; Email: rttlaw@pticom.com.
3. Deposit and Payment. A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check, or money order. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the 10% deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the property will revert to Bank of Guam.
4. Change of Terms. Auctioneer and Bank of Guam reserve the right to change any of the terms of conduct and enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.
5. Inspection and No Warranty. Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property. Contact the Law Office of Robert T. Torres for scheduled viewing and inspection times. The interests of the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.

DATED this 23rd day of December, 2015

/s/
Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer

Saipan Marianas Lions, Alpha Leos Club adopt 3 bus stops

The two clubs have adopted bus stops in Chalan Laulau, Gualo Rai, and Navy Hill. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Marianas Lions Club and its youth counterpart, Saipan Marianas Alpha Leos Club, paint one of the three school bus stops that they adopted.

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Marianas Lions Club and its youth counterpart, the Saipan Marianas Alpha Leos Club, have adopted three school bus stops.

According to region chair and Leo Club advisor Ladyvir Canape, they will paint the third one, which is in Gualo Rai, this coming Saturday.

For the past two Saturdays, both clubs have been cleaning and painting the bus stops that they adopted in Chalan Laulau and Navy Hill. She said that they chose the three sites because of their uniformed designs.

They will also be putting the logo of both the clubs in the bus stop but they are still looking at how to do it.

Canape said they wanted a project that is close to the Leos being a newly established organization in Saipan.

"We wanted a project that is related to the students," Canape said.

The Leo Club is composed young people who are 12 to 17 years of age. It aims to encourage, mold, and build strong, well-rounded, and service-oriented as well as community-oriented young adults.

So far, there has been positive response to the Leo Club, according to Canape.

Canape said they were able to fund the project and buy materials through their three-day Christmas caroling program last December.

Typhoon Soudelor cleanup set until May

JON PEREZ

Volunteers from the Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts and the CSR staff of Best Sunshine International, Ldt. get their gloves as they prepare for their cleanup last Saturday.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts director Jenny Hegland said the ongoing cleanup and debris clearing of Typhoon Soudelor-related debris will run through May to follow the removal schedule set by the Saipan Mayor's Office and the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality.

CARE volunteers and the Corporate Social Responsibility of Best Sunshine International, Ld. teamed up in another cleanup, the 24th since October last year, last Saturday covering certain areas in Koblerville and Chalan Piao.

Hegland said CARE's focus is taking referrals from the public who need any assistance in clearing up debris left by Typhoon Soudelor.

"CARE can take referrals for residents needing assistance as this is our focus, helping sort and move to the curbside for families unable to do this themselves," said Hegland. "The Mayor's Office and BECQ do the actual removal with the heavy equipment."

She added the respective staff of Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang and BECQ had been a big help with the clearing up operations and making sure they covered all areas in each villages.

"Still there is a lot of debris left by Typhoon Soudelor. Good thing we have the Mayor's Office and BECQ to help us. The Mayor's Office literally checked every street in the villages and marked the finished areas," said Hegland.

Discerning where to clean-up and if the debris they are going to pick up are related to the typhoon or not has also been challenging, according to Hegland.

"There [also] tends to be a misunderstanding among the public as to what constitutes typhoon-related debris. However, the monitors are trained and know what they are looking for so they are the people who make those discernments," she added.

Volunteers could not also just enter a yard of a house to avoid confusion and being labeled as trespassers.

"There's debris left on the yard of a house. We always check if the homeowner is at home and always ask their permission before we go in to pick up the debris. We don't get it if the homeowners are not home," Hegland said.

Volunteers are also welcome to join in another clean-up scheduled on Saturday, Jan. 30, from 8:30am to 12noon.

Small craft advisory until Saturday

A small craft advisory is in effect in the CNMI through Saturday afternoon and a high surf advisory is in effect until 6pm today along west and north facing shores.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center, fresh trade winds will increase to strong on Wednesday and continue for the next several days.

Combined seas of 8 to 10 feet will increase to between 9 and 12 feet by Thursday due to increasing northwest swell associated with a shear line. East swell will increase later in the week due to a trade wind surge.

Combined seas of 7 to 9 feet last night will increase to between 8 and 10 feet overnight. Combined seas are expected to peak between 9 and 12 feet Thursday before slowly decreasing below hazardous levels Saturday.

Hazardous surf of 7 to 9 feet on west and north facing shores could build to a range of 8 to 11 feet by early Wednesday. The hazardous surf will gradually subside by Wednesday night or Thursday morning.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is advising the general public and inexperience mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, to avoid navigating in these conditions and take extra precautionary measures on entering and leaving harbor and inlets. Avoid also venturing into the water along exposed reefs and beaches especially those facing north and west exposures as rip currents will be life threatening. ***(PR)***

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy second birthday to our ninja Zion Jay-Ross Calistro. You have brought so much joy in our lives. We love you and hope that you will enjoy your special day. Love you always, from Mommy, Ricky, Papa Jeff, and Nana Pauline

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-7859
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Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF GUAM, **Plaintiff,** **vs.** **ELPHIDIA B. CAMACHO** **Defendant.**	**Civil Action No. 15-0025** **NOTICE OF HEARING ON PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR DEFAULT JUDGMENT**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on February 9, 2016, at 1:30pm, a hearing will be held before Judge Camacho on Plaintiff's Motion for Default Judgment in the above-captioned matter, at the Superior Court for the CNMI, *Guma Hustisia*, Civic Center, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Respectfully submitted this 13th day of January, 2016.

/s/ Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
For Food and Beverage Concession

The Northern Marianas Sports Association (hereinafter, "NMSA") is responsible for the operation, management and administration of the Susupe Sports Complex. To assure that participants and spectators are accorded adequate food and beverage services at the Complex, NMSA hereby requests proposals from currently licensed companies, experienced and capable of providing such services and wishing to be considered for a Contract to operate a food and beverage concession. The Contract term will be from June 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017.

NMSA will evaluate proposals and award a Contract for the concession service.

The RFP Package will be available until February 29, 2016 during business hours at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan.

A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 5, 2016, at 11:30 a.m., at the Conference room at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Proposals are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, 2016 at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan.

Proposers are required to pay a $50.00 non-refundable fee for each copy of the RFP.

NMSA assumes no obligation of any kind for expenses incurred by a respondent to this Notice.

All inquiries must be in writing, and sent to Michael A. White at fax no. 234-9537 or emailed to mwhite@saipan.com.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB16-DLNR/DFW-044

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2016 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW TWIN ENGINES THE DFW 27' BOSTON WHALER CHALLENGER BOAT FOR DLNR – DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, **LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL,** SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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/S/ RICHARD B. SEMAN
SECRETARY OF DLNR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

WANTED

NEWS REPORTER

The *Saipan Tribune* is looking for a FULL-TIME news reporter.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Above average writing skills and can work within deadlines;
- Fast learner, self-starter, and a team player;
- Computer literate;
- With photography skills;
- Must have reliable means of transportation.

If you have what it takes to be part of a dynamic team, email your résumé and samples of your work to editor@saipantribune.com. You may also drop it off at the *Saipan Tribune* office on the second floor of the JP Center Building on Beach Road, Garapan. ON-ISLAND HIRES PREFERRED.

Saipan Tribune, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer.
Qualified women, minorities, and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

CHC Volunteers looking for directors, members

With the Commonwealth Health Center Volunteers Association celebrating 30 years of service, the non-profit association is inviting new members to join its board of directors or help with the group's fundraising and volunteer work.

The CHC Volunteers Association looks forward to welcoming new members and volunteers, including helping to plan and launch the biggest fundraising event leading up to its 30th anniversary this August.

A general membership meeting of the CHC Volunteers Association is scheduled for Feb. 5, 4pm at the CHC CE Conference Room.

CHC Volunteers Association has been dependent on the generosity of the community, who contributed so much to various fundraising projects over the last 29 years.

The group's files show countless many individuals over the years have joined either as members of its board or as valuable volunteers.

Its records also confirm that the CHC Volunteers Association has raised over $2 million all from the generosity of the community and the business sector.

The majority of the raised funds have been donated to the CNMI's lone public hospital—CHC—by way of purchasing an array of patient care equipment and supplies. About 5 percent had been donated to individuals and/or community organizations to improve and/or assist in health care services on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

CHC Volunteers Association's signature fundraising is operating and managing the CHCVA Gift Shop, which has been kept open only through the valuable personal time of volunteers.

The gift shop is open Monday-Thursday from 8am to 4pm and Fridays from 8am to 12pm and closed during holidays and weekends.

Do you have a few hours a month to serve on the CHC Volunteers Association 11-member board of directors or volunteer at the gift shop? Please contact 236-8363 or 236-8364 for more information. ***(PR)***

Report provides snapshot of Pacific trade

SUVA, Fiji—A comprehensive Pacific Islands Trade Report will be launched by the Pacific Community and the European Union on Feb. 3, 2016 in Suva, Fiji.

The report uses International Trade Centre data to illustrate the main primary sector export products from 15 Pacific Island countries, the main export markets for these products and whether they are growing or declining.

Fiji shines as an example for other Pacific Island countries to follow, accounting for 96 percent of all regional exports.

The report will be launched by the Pacific Community director-general Dr. Colin Tukuitonga, the European Union Ambassador to the Pacific, H.E. Andrew Jacobs, and Fiji's Trade Commissioner to Papua New Guinea, Navitalai Tuivuniwai.

Members of the diplomatic corps, leading trade organizations and development partners will be attending the event.

The Pacific Islands Trade Report was produced by the European Union-funded Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade project, implemented by SPC.

Media are invited to cover the launch at the Grand Pacific Hotel at 3pm on Wednesday Feb. 3.

The media will also have a Q&A opportunity with the report writers; SPC-IACT Export Marketing Officer, Ms. Sally-Ann Hughes and external consultant, Mr. John Kamea at the end of the event.

Embargoed media access to the report is available on request by emailing media@spc.int. ***(PR)***

Pacific History Conference early registration now open

The Pacific History Association, the University of Guam, and the Guam Preservation Trust invite scholars to participate in the 22nd PHA Conference from May 19-21, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency Guam, Mariana Islands.

PHA members include scholars doing research in the fields of history, anthropology, social sciences, literature, music, language, education, indigenous studies, cultural studies, and in other fields significant in Oceania's history. We therefore sincerely welcome worldwide scholars interested in similar issues to participate in the conference and exchange ideas.

The conference theme, "Mo'na: Our Pasts Before Us," invokes Pan-Pacific ways of negotiating the past, present, and future that blur conventional western notions of History as linear, progressive and finite. With this theme, we also seek out linkages to the Festival of Pacific Arts which Guam will host immediately following our conference.

The conference will feature four keynote speakers: Dr. Robert A. Underwood, University of Guam; Dr. Katerina Teaiwa, Australian National University; Dr. Greg Dvorak, Hitotsubashi University; and Dr. David Hanlon, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

PHA is also pleased to welcome the Symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music Study Group on Music and Dance of Oceania. Those interested in presenting papers related to Oceania's music and dance traditions are invited to submit abstracts to PHA.

Registration, through the conference website, is now open. Early registration, running through Feb. 29, 2016, is $200, while early student registration is $100. If space permits, late registration will run from March 1 to May 5, 2016, with fees of $250 for general registrants and $150 for students

This project is supported in part by the Pacific History Association, University of Guam, Guam Preservation Trust, Bank of Guam, and the Guam Visitors Bureau.

For more information visit www.uog.edu/phaconference. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Water interruption at Afetnas today

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers in Afetnas will experience an emergency power interruption Wednesday morning to allow linemen safe access to replace a rotten power pole.

At 9am, CUC line crews will temporarily interrupt power service along Afetnas Road to the Duaenas family compound. The pole replacement is expected to take up to three hours to complete, at which time power will be restored to the area.

For more information, please visit our website www.cucgov.org or contact CUC's Customer Call Center at 664-4CUC (664-4282).

CUC is a non-profit autonomous agency of the CNMI government. The utility provides electric power, water and wastewater services to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. ***(CUC)***

Regional Language Arts Conference Feb. 19-20

The University of Guam's 28th Annual Regional Language Arts Conference will be held at the Pacific Star Hotel on Friday, Feb. 19, from 4pm to 6pm, and on Saturday, Feb. 20, from 8am to 4pm.

Register online at http://www.uog.edu/CLASS-LAC.

Call Kathleen Duenas or Velma Camacho at 735-2725 for more information. ***(PR)***

Green flag for Managaha, Tinian beaches

The Division of Environmental Quality has given the waters off Managaha and Tinian a green flag.

DEQ analyzes water samples collected from Managaha's and Tinian's recreational beaches and docks this week as part of the regularly scheduled sampling. None of the samples collected contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria nor did they exceed the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards.

The division analyzed a total of 11 samples from the shore surrounding Managaha and 10 samples from the shore surrounding Tinian this week.

Marine Water Quality Reports are also provided at www.deq.gov.mp/sec.asp?secD=52. Interested individuals and organizations can also receive email notifications for the weekly marine water quality reports. To do so, please send an email to waterqualityreport@deq.gov.mp

DEQ welcomes all inquiries as to the quality of the beach water. The public is encouraged to contact DEQ at 664-8500 with any questions concerning this matter. ***(PR)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 27, 2000

CDA notes hike in loads

Reeling from the adverse impact of the economic downturn, more businesses have resorted to loans from both public and private financing companies with the government's Commonwealth Development Authority lending over $5 million in a three-month period alone. Government statistics for the second quarter of 1999 indicated that at the trend CDA is giving out loans, the government-controlled finance institution may have exceeded the previous year's $8 million tally. The dramatic increase in CDA-approved guarantee loans offset the drop in direct loans to $200,000 during the second quarter of 1999 from the previous year's $900,000.

Saipan airport inbound traffic down 24%

Inbound traffic to the Saipan International Airport dropped by 24 percent in November last year compared with landing statistics during the same period in 1998, apparently as a result of Continental Micronesia's decision to cut back its CNMI operations. A financial report prepared by the Commonwealth Ports Authority disclosed a sharp decline in the number of inbound international flights at the Saipan airport, to only 260 last year from 342 in November 1998. However, deplanement increased by 25 percent from 30,520 two years ago to 38,209 last year, while enplanement grew by eight percent from 40,329 to 43,450.

January 27, 2005

New grant to temporarily solve bus shortage

A new grant from the Federal Transit Authority was recently provided to the Public School System, a move seen as alleviating the islands' acute shortage of school buses. A bid came out this week in newspapers announcing that PSS is purchasing four more buses in addition to eight 10-passenger capacity vans.

The bid bulletin will run for 30 days before short-listed qualified bidders are announced. PSS did not state in the bulletin about a pre-bid conference for the second bidding, since Borja said they made sure that the bulletin clearly stated the requirements for suppliers or vendors who will participate. PSS was supposed to get the its new batch of school buses last Dec. 2004 but due to the protest on the bidding, public school students continue to have difficulty in their day-to-day commuting. Currently, PSS has a total of only 11 school buses, but only nine are operational since the other two needs maintenance.

New labor regs require OK of alien worker's govt

The Department of Labor has moved to enforce agreements between the CNMI and foreign governments that tighten procedures for the hiring of nonresidents workers in the Commonwealth. The department adopted emergency amendments to the Alien Labor Rules and Regulations that require employers who seek to employ guest workers to first secure the approval of both the CNMI Labor and the government in the worker's country of origin. The new policy also states that the Division of Immigration Services will not issue an authorization to board and the Labor Department an authorization of entry for an alien worker unless his or her employment contract has been certified as approved by the foreign government.

January 27, 2006

CUC back in emergency

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. is again under the administration's direct control, with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial declaring CUC under a state of emergency effective yesterday. Fitial said the new emergency declaration for CUC will remain in force for 60 days. After this period, an executive order permanently placing CUC under the Executive Branch will become effective. The executive order, which will abolish the CUC board of directors, was also signed yesterday.

Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez, a former CUC executive director, said that the purpose of the governor's action is two-fold: to bring in a financial management team to evaluate CUC's exact financial situation and to improve CUC's operation. He noted that the administration currently provides CUC with a $2-million subsidy, on top of the $800,000 paid for the government's utility bills.

Tourism crisis bringing players together

With the CNMI tourism industry hamstrung by an air service crisis, the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands is pinning its hopes on the government's efforts to focus more on the industry so it could drive up the number of tourists visiting the islands. Paradoxically, though, the association views the crisis as one that is bringing local industry players together to weather the impact of the pullout of Japan Airlines' regular flights to Saipan.

Island Snapshots

VILLAGE PRIDE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Best Sunshine International, Ltd. majority shareholder Margaret Cui Lijie, third left, is flanked by Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres, First Lady Diann Torres, BSI chief services officer Tao Xing, Reps. Vinnie Sablan and Ralph Yumul, and BSI Corporate Social Responsibility director Geralyn Dela Cruz, among others, during the Village Pride Project in Tanapag.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Residents of San Vicente and nearby villages gather during Friday evening's Village Pride Project of BSI's corporate social responsibility team.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tanapag children and their parents enjoy the picnic-style Village Pride Project.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cui beams with House Floor Leader George Camacho and BSI chief services officer Tao Xing, among others.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The weekly BSI Village Pride Project is open to the public.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Talaabwogh dancers grace the stage to perform a traditional dance as one of the highlights of Friday's Village Pride Project in Tanapag.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKSHOP

Lauri Ogumoro, executive director for Karidat, and Aatorney Pam Brown, a member of the CNMI Human Trafficking Intervention Coalition, share the story of a specific case of human trafficking in the NMI as part of National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness month. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Maisie Bermudes Tenorio, the executive director for by Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, leads Mount Carmel School students in the "In Their Shoes" activity.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mount Carmel School students participate in the "In Their Shoes" activity.

NUMBERS GAME JON PEREZ

CNMI MathCourt individual champion Bei Bei Chen, left, joins coach Frederick Guintu, second right, and fellow Agape Christian School students, from left, Claire Song, Rebecca Xu, Andrea Feng, En Jie Hu, Guintu, and Allan Zhao for a group photo. Chen, Song, and Zhao are members of Team CNMI while three of their schoolmates are alternates.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Netflix and the making of a TV cord cutter

Maybe you've binge-watched the popular TV mini-series "Making a Murderer." If not, don't worry, no spoilers here. Just a suggestion: Try out this compelling crime documentary, but know where to find it. The show's on Netflix.

A bunch of the most talked-about television programs aren't on traditional TV networks or cable channels, they're on Internet streaming services. "Orange is the New Black" and "Narcos" are on Netflix. "Transparent" and "Mozart in the Jungle" are on Amazon. Hulu has original programs but also has a vast library of great shows from other networks, ranging from "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia" to "Seinfeld" repeats.

In other words, couch potatoes, this is a golden age for television viewing in which you don't need a couch ... or a television. You can watch anytime, anywhere on your laptop, smartphone or tablet.

The phrase of the decade to describe the economic and cultural shifts brought on by digital technology is "disruption." It's a marvel to contemplate: how Uber upended the taxi industry, websites challenged the news business, wine apps disrupted sommeliers (it's true, your smartphone is ready to recommend a nice shiraz). Now it's television's turn.

The TV revolution isn't a sudden phenomenon. It's been 30 years since there were just three national TV networks, and as channels proliferate the quality of shows keeps improving. But we're on the cusp of a huge change, in which viewers realize they don't need to pay a big monthly bill for cable's hundreds of channels: They can cut the cord and piece together their own Internet-based collections of subscription programming.

Last year, 17.1 percent of U.S. households didn't pay for traditional TV—they either cut the cord or never had one. That number will jump to 22.6 percent of households by 2019, according to a forecast by eMarketer. The trend is especially pronounced among tech-savvy millennials. A Pew Research Center survey says 19 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds are cord cutters (they dropped cable or satellite TV subscriptions), while another 16 percent have never had a traditional pay TV package.

Consider the cultural shift involved: Once most adults aspired to owning a big-screen TV. Visit young people today and you may search in vain for that oversized TV in the living room. Thinking of one couple we know, you'll find a husband and wife sitting together on the couch, each plugged into a separate portable device, watching something different.

The first big acknowledgment of the change came last summer when Walt Disney Co. warned that its cable channels, including ESPN, were losing subscribers. Media stocks tanked, wiping out nearly $50 billion in market value in two days. Not everyone suffered. Netflix, worth $44 billion, was the best-performing S&P 500 stock in 2015. The company is growing globally and giving fits to Hol-

See NETFLIX on Next Page

I HAVEN'T SAID ONE WORD ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND'S DISGRACEFUL, UNACCEPTABLE AND DEPLORABLE BEHAVIOR...
NO, YOU'VE SAID THREE...
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Saipan's Educational Opportunity

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

I was part of the staff that hosted a group of Japanese students from Koryo High School west of Tokyo at the Northern Marianas College (NMC) Community Development Institute (CDI), stumbling on a market need. In a four-hour set of activities, I enticed 15 Nippongo students to use the English they already knew. Being in Sinosphere that learns English by reading and writing rather than speaking, a leftover of the method used in learning the radicals and characters of their hanzi, kanji, and hanja, they are tongue-tied on speaking.

Saipan is the nearest island to Sinosphere that speaks English with tones often in Indo-Malay-Austro-Polynesian-Urdu and continental Europe accents, as well as the British clip, American twang, Kiwi exactitude, and Aussie slang. With tourism push toward "paradise," the island sends out visitors back to their homes singing to modern amenities among a recognizably native Micronesian culture and ecologically pristine environs.

The English basis of common discourse that is the islands' gift, a language immersion program in place is a natural. Created from teaching Oral English in Dong Bei not too long ago, I offer English speaking language immersion thrust to those in Sinosphere who wish to be proficient in oral English as required by their respective academies.

Most language instructions are focused on building vocabulary where words and their meanings are learned first, then get to the phonetic nature of English to learn its sounds and spoken forms. The Putunghua requires 4,000 Hanzi (characters) just to understand the language, and learners readily pick up the spoken form even with its four tones, but is fundamentally visual that requires familiarity with the radicals and their characters to understand it well.

That's what makes the learning of English native to CNMI voices so attractive. We can package an island tour with an overlay of language immersion to add to the attraction; the tourists learn a language while viewing nature and historical sites.

Here's a thing that makes language learning often cumbersome. We adopted a method fitted to those learning any of the Sinosphere languages in its reading and written form that requires familiarity with words and meanings. Words in English are translated to the Chinese/Korean/Japanese equivalents, leaving the learner recall the words in their native tongue with their meanings, and forget the English word all together.

We now know that the brain can hold up to 24 languages, and that the learning can be a direct one congruent to the functions of the brain, which has the sensual skills in the medula oblongata, the emotive sensitivities and balance in the cerebellum, and cognitive functions in the cerebrum's wonderful cortex. All three informs the will when it decides with the guts what to do. Then it goes out and does it, which brings the whole cycle on the spin all over again, only the next time, with a higher level of meaning.

Saipan is naturally capable of immersing learners from the Sinosphere to "speak" their English, in the same vein as the other languages of the world can easily be learned in Saipan, e.g. Zhonghua, Hangul, Nihonggo, Arabo, Urdu, Parsi, to name some, using the same methodology, though for the reading and writing part for Sinosphere, it involves visuals of characters too.

But in learning English, the usual method is to give the meaning of a word, to let one "understand" by giving the translation without pronouncing, hearing, and repeating the English word first, or after the translation. This is not effective pedagogy. Learners remember the native word and ignores the English word all together, for the learner feels ze already "knows" its meaning.

We might suggest the "hear and repeat" method be adhered to first, get the vocal cord to "taste" the syllables and the eardrums to drown on the sound before venturing into exploring the word's meaning. That's the universal method a language is learned at Mama's breast: hear and repeat.

After hearing and repeating the word, they can write it the way it sounds, not to worry whether it is spelled right. Only after they use it in a sentence and write it down does the facilitator show how a word is spelled. If learners hear and repeat a word, they encounter it twice; write it, a third time, and if spelling is corrected, fourth time. The English word, when grounded on experience, is remembered.

Students in China, including but not exclusive of pilots in training at Shenyang Aerospace U are invited to Saipan to spend a week or two on a language immersion course that will let them learn how to learn, allow them to speak English, be exposed and acculturated to an international setting to prepare them for a training in Australia, Canada, or the U.S., visit historical sites and enjoy a swim in the lagoon besides.

The training can be done with the college, island institutes, and travel agencies. I got a product to market. Interested? Send an email.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Halo! Everbody home?

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.

When simple folks express heart-felt sentiments about hardship at home meeting family financial obligations you know that a lot has gone wrong in paradise. It's a voice you can't ignore for it came from the depth of their soul. It was painful listening to their lumpy or quivering voices.

Fifteen long years of "do-nothing" turns family income into zero. In other words, there's no improvement in salaries throughout the same period.

Yet families had to deal with paying the first family home, automobile, real estate and auto insurance, health and life insurance, basic goods prices of which have gone up considerably, among others. Imagine juggling which loan to pay on a given payday Friday. This decision means paying for late charges. There's no option for families up this alley.

You keep your ears to the ground in hopes that someone had the brilliance and confidence to move family income forward. But senators gave themselves $2,500 per month to deal with cost of living expenses. The fiscal virus is likely to hit the lower chamber soon.

Senators really had the gall to overlook the needs of the people they represent while bagging $2,500 per month in additional income. They decided to denigrate and relegate the livelihood of their people into soft kill and wipe out by driving them into the lowest corner of poverty.

The grand insensitivity makes you wonder if they haven't been inoculated with nepenthe, a drug that causes forgetfulness as to completely ignore people they represent. Call it apathy and greed that feeds only their pockets.

No wonder the simple folks are angry and justifiably so! Have their constituents turned into bloodless robotics? It is also rumored that other expenses are paid for via vouchers from their rich friends. Our vouchers are in the bankbooks we struggle to pay monthly.

Though explained in layman's term, their expressions deal with economic depression that translates into vicious familial hardship. This has been and continues to be the toxic legacy of republicans now in office. Villagers know this can't go on for another 15 years. Something just doesn't add up. To expect family income improving is basically dead!

It's hard walking the path of poverty with hopelessness and uncertainty piled atop our aspiration to see better days ahead. I'm not sure Da Boys could silence the mounting discontentment in the villages. It grows louder by the day!

Dazed Bunch: Pile this view atop a dazed group on the hill and you begin to see and understand the troubled and dissonant voices of our people in the villages.

There's no leadership. It created a vacuum of suspicion from all over the archipelago. Imagine reminding the imperial bunch to employ the concept of "servant leadership" where the focus is service to others over the self. I look back at history and the concept used to be the foundation of representation here. It is no longer! Uncertainty has fomented fear all over.

The economic dystopia—where nothing works—is internally inflicted. It comes from the lack of leadership who equally ignored putting forth a thoughtful plan to guide growth and development here. The vacuum created "affluenza" where the elected elite trashed the future of the indigenous people in favor of their rich donors. This is despicably outrageous!

I've even gone back cultural soul-searching if it isn't part of our way of life looking out for the wellbeing of others in our community. I thought care and compassion are embedded in the fabric of our culture. We also openly use communal sharing to help our very own from sinking deeper into the abyss of abject poverty. Why have the elitist bunch abandoned our people?

I think we've reached the end of a forked road where we must now decide to recapture what's ours as indigenous people. It's about navigating our future against becoming slaves of the new affluenza and filthy sugar daddies!

Imagine shaking off mañana

Through the years we've seen changes from subsistence living to government jobs and the local view that a public sector job is success; private sector jobs, failure.

I've probed for the measurement of this superficial definition to no avail. It's a bothersome view where we ignore the productive in favor of the non-productive sector of our community.

It led to the belief of "everything is government". Yes, I understand the role of government in the conduct of local affairs. But it has also built a bloated public sector that remains the largest employer today. This is very unhealthy! Why would anyone force taxpayers to pay for the negligence and excess of public officials who are clueless of runaway expenditure at our expense?

I fail to see why allow fiduciary failure to go on. So some have seen useless political jobs as the golden parachute for survival. It discourages training (skills acquisition) and education. It feeds upon bosses who run a corrupt system, army of precinct and patronage workers, the smalltime grafters and all the favor seekers and dispensers. Why capitalize on the ignorance of people you've forced to fail for the rest of their lives? Don't you have any sense of justice about their future?

The disdain we have on the productive sector of the economy needs to change if we're to move forward in stride reining-in investments and new sources of revenue. It's private industries that turn in a profit not the government!

It's a matter of policy focus, isn't it? When do we begin?

SENATOR

From Page 10

lywood competitors, who shake their heads because they know they gave the company its start. (Netflix's original business was movie rentals.)

It's an especially topsy-turvy situation because Hollywood is on both sides of this equation. Yes, the TV and cable industries are freaked out by cord-cutting viewers, but the bigger Netflix and other services get, the more money they have to spend on programming ... which they acquire from Hollywood studios. "Netflix has been built on the back of great talent from studios like our own," Fox Television Group Co-Chairman Dana Walden told the Los Angeles Times. "It has helped to reinvigorate fan bases of shows. But from the network side, it's very challenging."

Cable still has a strong hold, especially on viewers who want to watch live events like sports and news, and cable channels like the fees they receive from cable providers. But the fragmentation has begun: For example, you can subscribe to HBO via the Internet without having cable service. Other experiments in a la carte pricing, or unbundling, are underway.

The entertainment and cable industries are in a bind. They need to rethink their business models to give consumers even more choices. According to PwC, the average cable subscriber receives 194 channels but regularly watches only 17. So can you blame viewers for cutting the cord?

(c) 2016 *Chicago Tribune*

The truth about Social Security

By ANDREW G. BIGGS
Los Angeles Times

Andrew G. Biggs is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He served as the principal deputy commissioner of the Social Security Administration from 2008 to 2009. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

Americans are embracing the idea that we should expand Social Security. A movement started by a few progressive activists spread to opinion makers and ultimately to presidential candidates such as Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. But is a broadly expanded Social Security program really necessary? And can we afford it? The best evidence indicates that the answer to both questions is "No."

For years, the Social Security Administration stated that, for an average person, Social Security replaced about 40 percent of pre-retirement earnings, versus financial advisors' recommendation of a total "replacement rate" of about 70 percent. This gap caused widespread concern, but almost no one understood how the administration generated its 40 percent statistic. It turned out the administration was using a misleading method — comparing the benefits paid to the average new retiree to the wages of the average, still active worker.

In 2014, the Social Security Trustees removed the calculated replacement rates from their annual report, fearing they may lead to confusion.

The following year, an expert panel appointed by the Social Security Advisory Board recommended a more logical way to determine the replacement rate: comparing Social Security benefits to an average of the retiree's final years of substantial earnings. When the Congressional Budget Office used this alternative method, it found that Social Security replaced close to 60 percent of final earnings. For low-income retirees, Social Security replaced close to 100 percent.

Setting aside the replacement rate issue, some reformers insist that we must expand Social Security because the broader state of the American retirement system is so dire. For instance, some cite data showing that 52 percent of Americans over age 55 don't have a retirement account. But roughly half of that group — 25 percent of the total — have a traditional pension plan. The other half are mostly very poor — with average household incomes of about $20,000 — and will receive a Social Security benefit close to their pre-retirement earnings.

Reformers also point to government statistics purporting to show that retirees have little income outside Social Security. Yet the source of these statistics, the Current Population Survey, counts income only if it's delivered regularly — say, a monthly check from a traditional defined benefit plan — leaving out lump sum payments and irregular deductions from a 401(k). That's a significant oversight.

Academic studies using more rigorous methods paint a more optimistic picture. A 2014 report from the Rand Corp. concluded that "about 71 percent of individuals ages 66-69 are adequately economically prepared to retire, given expected consumption." A scholar at the Brookings Institution and two economists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that roughly three-quarters of the households in a large sample "had accumulated sufficient resources in 2004 to maintain pre-retirement living standards in retirement."

After a sometimes-difficult transition from traditional defined benefit pensions to 401(k)-type plans, the private sector is now well equipped to help Americans supplement their Social Security benefits. In 2012, 75 percent of all private sector workers were offered a retirement plan by their employer and 61 percent participated, far more than the 38 percent who participated in traditional pensions at their peak in 1980.

Instead of requiring workers to affirmatively sign up for their retirement plan, 59 percent of 401(k)s now automatically enroll employees. Instead of managing their own investments, 41 percent of 401(k) participants now invest in target-date funds that automatically adjust their investment as they age. Administrative costs, which often have been too high, fell by more than 10 percent from 2009 to 2013 and now are comparable to traditional pensions. Total retirement assets today are higher relative to Americans' incomes than any time in recorded history.

The main problem with Social Security is not that it's stingy, but that it's inadequately funded. According to the Social Security Trustees, the program's long-term deficits have risen by 58 percent since 2008. The Social Security Advisory Board's 2015 expert panel and the Congressional Budget Office both project even larger funding shortfalls. A policy such as eliminating the $118,500 ceiling on wages subject to payroll taxes, a favorite of progressive advocates, would raise U.S. taxes to Scandinavian levels without fixing the long-term shortfall.

Targeted reforms could improve Social Security greatly. For instance, many individuals with short careers fail to even qualify for Social Security benefits because of a 10-year "vesting period." None of the existing Social Security expansion plans fix this problem. But a universal minimum Social Security benefit paid to all retirees, such as is offered in New Zealand, could reduce poverty in old age at relatively low cost. Likewise, small-scale adjustments such as universal auto-enrollment and auto-escalation for 401(k)s could improve the private retirement system.

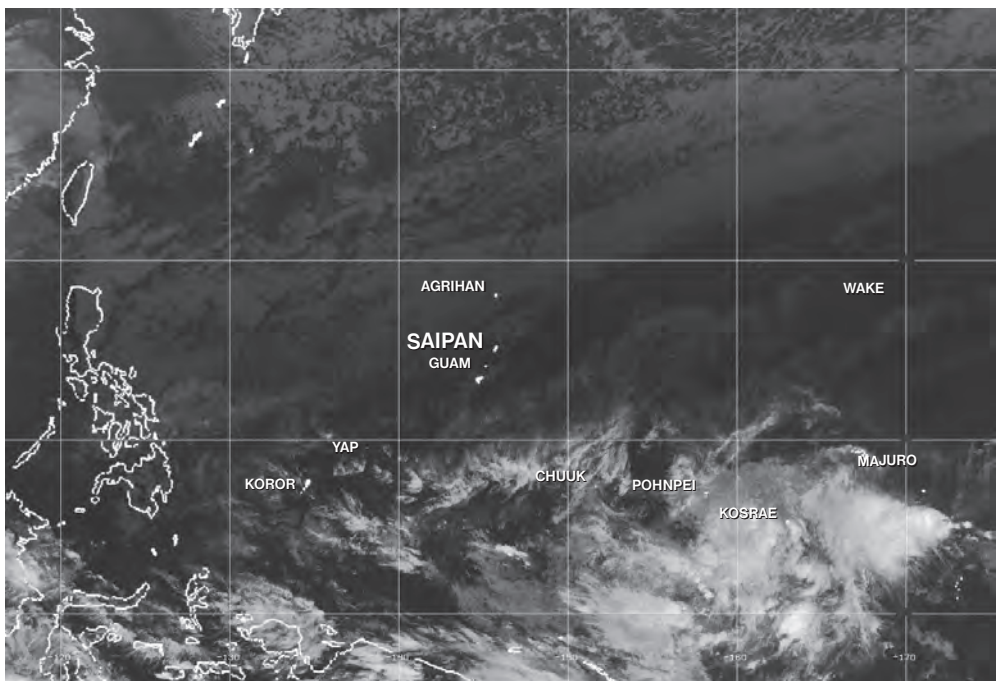
The case for across-the-board Social Security increases rests on misunderstood data and a willingness to ignore Social Security's rising unfunded liabilities. Neither is a foundation for good public policy.

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph with gusts to 35 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph with gusts to 35 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph with gusts to 35 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86º ▼74º	▲84º ▼74º	▲84º ▼73º	▲85º ▼73º	▲86º ▼74º

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 12:30 PM, TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2016
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front enters the discussion area north of Wake Island near 25N166E and extends to 21N155E then continues as a shear line to beyond 130E at 11N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and north of this boundary to beyond 25N. A near-equatorial trough extends east-southeast from 3N140E to EQ161E. Convergence north and east of the trough is producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of Pohnpei, Kosrae and Majuro south of a line from 3N155E to 7N170E to 5N174E. Converging trade winds are generating scattered showers south of Yap within 100 miles of 5N141E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Windy	▲84	▼79
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲89	▼77
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Chuuk	Rain	▲84	▼78
Pohnpei	Thundershowers	▲85	▼79
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼79
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼79

Around the Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲80	▼67
Beijing	Sunny	▲35	▼15
Hong Kong	Rain	▲63	▼61
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲82	▼69
London	Rain	▲56	▼37
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲73	▼47
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼75
Melbourne	Thundershowers	▲84	▼66
Miami	Mostly Cloudy	▲78	▼71
New York	Showers	▲44	▼37
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲51	▼39
Paris	Showers	▲54	▼49
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲49	▼31
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲62	▼45
Salem	Showers	▲55	▼47
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲61	▼48
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲39	▼21
Tokyo	Sunny	▲55	▼35
Washington, DC	Showers	▲42	▼35

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

3:46 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.1 Feet
10:23 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
4:25 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.9 Feet
9:23 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:12 PM
Thursday	6:47 AM	6:13 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:13 PM
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:14 PM
Sunday	6:46 AM	6:14 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	8:55 PM	8:45 AM
Thursday	9:42 PM	9:25 AM
Friday	10:29 PM	10:03 AM
Saturday	11:16 PM	10:41 AM
Sunday		11:20 AM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 24, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:20am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

MU7162	5:10am	08:00am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/193	8:40am	11:10pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA2920/193	2:20pm	11:10pm	2 via GUM-ROR
UA2926/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

MU7161	10:00 pm	5:30am	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/2920	10:20pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Apple's iPhone success may be reaching its peak

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Apple could soon face one of its biggest challenges to date: Peak iPhone.

Most analysts believe Apple surpassed its own record by selling more than 74.5 million units of its flagship product in the final three months of 2015. But there are signs that iPhone sales in the first three months of 2016 will—for the first time ever—show an abrupt decline from the same period a year earlier.

That could mark a pivotal moment for the Silicon Valley giant. Apple is the world's biggest company, in terms of stock value, thanks to the iPhone's surging popularity around the world. In business terms, Apple makes most of its money from iPhone sales.

But concerns about slowing growth have sent the stock into a months-long slump, fueling debate about what kind of company Apple will be in the future.

The iPhone contributed nearly two-thirds of Apple's $234 billion in revenue last year. None of the other new products Apple has launched in recent years have emerged as blockbusters. That's led some critics to suggest Apple has lost its innovative touch, while others say it's evolving to depend on a broader base of related tech products and services.

One thing is clear, said analyst Angelo Zino at S&P Capital IQ: "Last year was an unprecedented year for Apple and the iPhone.... You'll never see that type of growth from the iPhone again."

When CEO Tim Cook reports Tuesday on Apple's sales for the last three months of 2015, investors will be watching closely for any hints about how Apple's signature smartphone is faring in the current quarter. Sales usually fall somewhat after the holiday shopping season. But analysts say it appears Apple has cut production orders from key suppliers in recent weeks, suggesting it's lowered its own forecasts.

Apple hasn't commented on iPhone sales since last fall, when Cook struck an upbeat tone. In part, Zino and other experts say, the company is suffering from its own success. Apple sold 61 million iPhones in the March quarter of 2015, or 40 percent more than it did a year earlier. To match that growth rate, Apple would need to sell more than 85 million in the current period. Instead, analysts are expecting around 55 million.

An estimated 500 million people own iPhones now, which means Apple can rely on a significant number to upgrade each year. But some have put off buying a new model because they didn't see a strong reason to upgrade.

AP
In this Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2015, file photo, Apple CEO Tim Cook discusses the new iPhone 6s and iPhone 6s Plus during the Apple event at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco.

Despite some new features, "people are feeling like there hasn't been anything that's really new" in the latest iPhone models, known as the 6S and 6S Plus, which came out last fall, said market researcher John Feland of Argus Insights.

Apple will likely make significant changes in the next major iPhone release, expected in September, which could fuel another surge in sales. Some tech blogs have reported a new model might even be coming this spring.

The company went through a similar cycle a few years ago, when iPhone sales growth slowed to 7 percent in the final months of 2013. The next year, Apple introduced new models with significantly bigger screens. That sent sales skyrocketing, especially in Asia, where consumers had previously flocked to buy big-screen phones from rival Samsung.

But there may no more equally dramatic changes left to jump-start sales like that again. "Apple really pulled the big lever they had left unpulled, up to then," said tech analyst Jan Dawson of Jackdaw Research. "That was sort of a one-off event."

While iPhone sales may be slowing, Apple has launched other products and services tied to the iPhone—from the Apple Watch to the digital payments service known as Apple Pay, the subscription-based Apple Music and "smart home" software that lets users control their lights and appliances with Siri, the voice-enabled digital assistant on the iPhone and iPad. These are designed to make the iPhone itself more useful, while producing a steady stream of new revenue.

None of those new products have sold like the iPhone itself, however. Sales of the iPad have been declining for two years.

"Apple still has a lot of value, a lot of cash flow, so it's not to say the company is in trouble. But it's difficult to say that it's on the cutting edge," said Murillo Campello, a finance professor at Cornell University who follows Apple closely.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Breakfast bump: McDonald's US sales jump 5.7 percent

NEW YORK (AP)—McDonald's says offering breakfast around the clock helped jolt its sales. Sales at the world's biggest hamburger chain rose 5.7 percent in the U.S. for the final three months of 2015, boosted by unseasonably warm weather and the launch of an all-day breakfast menu in October. That marked the second straight quarter of domestic growth as McDonald's fights to win back customers, and the best showing since early 2012. Globally, sales rose 5 percent at established locations. McDonald's, which has more than 36,000 locations around the world, is working to turnaround its business under CEO Steve Easterbrook, who will mark one year on the job in March. The Oak Brook, Illinois, company has conceded that it failed to keep up with changing tastes, and that order speed and accuracy suffered as its menu grew more expansive.

Hilton launches new budget hotel chain aimed at young guests

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Hilton is launching a new hotel brand, focusing on budget travelers looking to spend $90 to $100 a night. The new brand, named Tru, aims to compete with economy and midscale chains like Comfort Inn, Fairfield Inn and La Quinta. Hilton Worldwide—which has more than 4,500 hotels globally—already has "limited service" brands like Hilton Garden Inn, Hampton Inn, Homewood Suites and Home2 Suites. This would be a new market for the chain. Hilton CEO Chris Nassetta notes that 40 percent of the demand for hotel rooms comes in this price segment, the largest of any market. He also says many of the economy and midscale chains offer an "inconsistent product and service delivery," giving Hilton the opportunity to build loyalty among younger travelers whose spending is limited right now, but could afford a more upscale location in the future.

Flight cancellations, delays persist in wake of US blizzard

NEW YORK (AP)—Airlines canceled around 1,600 flights Monday, and another 1,200 experienced delays, in the aftermath of a massive weekend blizzard that slammed into the eastern U.S., wreaking havoc on travel in the nation's busiest cities.

Even as the airlines resumed operations, the remnants of the storm posed problems. For instance, Delta said snow continued to hamper operations at LaGuardia and Newark airports.

On Monday, airports in the New York City area and Washington D.C. metro areas suffered the highest number of cancellations. For some travelers in those locations, getting home continued to be an adventure.

Newark Liberty International listed 260 canceled flights and 48 delays as of Monday afternoon, the most of any U.S. airport, according to the flight tracking service FlightAware. Meanwhile, LaGuardia listed 177 canceled flights and 30 delays with John F. Kennedy airport listing 46 cancellations and 40 delays.

In Washington D.C., Washington Dulles International listed 128 cancellations and 5 delays. Reagan National had 124 cancellations. Baltimore/Washington International listed 74 cancellations.

John Escobar, 27, finished a three-month work contract surgical technician at New York Presbyterian/Lawrence Hospital in Brooklyn on Friday and has been trying to get home to Fort Lauderdale ever since.

Escobar had flights canceled Saturday and Sunday. He booked a flight Monday on American Airlines, but there were no direct flights for under $1,000, "so I'm flying to Boston, then Charlotte, then home."

Among the major airlines, United Airlines, which is owned by United Continental Holdings Inc., suffered the brunt of cancellations as it has key hubs at both Newark Liberty and Washington Dulles. There are already more than 200 flight cancellations for Tuesday, with the bulk from United Airlines' regional carrier United Express at Washington Dulles.

Overall, airlines canceled about 13,000 flights for the five-day period Friday through Tuesday.

The storm dropped snow from the Gulf Coast to New England, with near-record snowfalls tallied from Washington, D.C. to New York City. At least 31 people have died as a result of the snowstorm. The deaths occurred in car accidents, from carbon monoxide poisoning, and from heart attacks while shoveling snow.

Obama to focus on expanding access to retirement accounts

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama will pitch some new proposals to expand access to retirement savings accounts and revisit some old ones when issuing his budget next month.

Many Americans are not well prepared for retirement, with nearly one in three yet to retire having any savings or pension available for their later years, according to a Federal Reserve report.

The White House says Obama's proposals, if enacted, would provide more than 30 million people access to a retirement account.

The biggest chunk of that increase would occur through legislation requiring employers that don't offer a retirement plan to automatically enroll their workers in an Individual Retirement Account. The employers that did so would get a tax credit of $3,000 to help them offset the administrative expense. The proposal was also part of last year's budget, but Congress did not pass it.

On the new front, Labor Secretary Thomas Perez says the administration will seek to make it easier for multiple employers to join together to offer retirement plans. For small employers, that would mean lower administrative expenses.

We are willing to take steps to make it easier and cheaper for employers to offer a path to dignified retirement," Perez said. "They should be willing to do the right thing and set up more plans so their workers can save."

Perez said that employers with a common bond, say auto dealers, can now pool together to offer a retirement plan. He said the president will recommend doing away with the "common bond" requirement and let people from all kinds of businesses join together. The White House says it's recommending that Congress pass legislation that would ensure the long-term sustainability of such arrangements.

A few states have recently approved state-run retirement plans for private-sector workers. The Obama administration says it wants to encourage those efforts and will finalize regulations later this year to ensure the plans don't run afoul of federal pension law.

Nation

Snow response in DC, NYC comes down to money, manpower

WASHINGTON (AP)—The nation's capital and its largest city both got walloped by the same near-record blizzard this weekend. But while Washington struggled to recover, New York City was mostly up and running on Monday.

In the District of Columbia, schools and government offices, monuments and memorials and museums were all shut down on Monday. The Metro had an extremely reduced schedule, providing free rides as a goodwill gesture. Digging out remained such a huge challenge that Mayor Muriel Bowser sought federal disaster aid.

In New York, the subway and schools were open, just a day and a half after the last flakes fell, and leaders praised themselves for getting this one right.

A look at the numbers helps explain the outcomes:

AP

Paths and a driveway are cleared of snow on the White House grounds in Washington, Monday, Jan. 25, 2016.

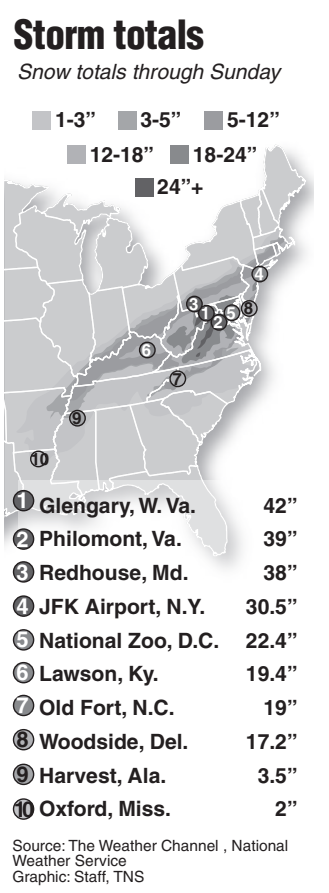
Snowfall:
Washington gets eight days of snowfall, accumulating 14.5 inches a year on average. New York gets 11 snowy days, accumulating 25.1 inches, according to federal climate data. In the "Snowmageddon" winter of 2009-2010, Washington got 56 inches and New York City got 51.4. But the capital got just 2 and 3 inches the next two winters, while New Yorkers can always count on at least some heavy snow 230 miles northeast.

Money:
Each spends about $9 per capita on snow removal: The District of Columbia government sets aside $6.2 million a year for its 658,000 people, while New York's snow budget is $77.5 million for its population of 8.4 million. The Big Apple's snow budget and population are each about 12 times bigger.

Size:
The capital covers 68 square miles, a fourth of New York's 302 square miles. The District has 4,400 lane miles to clear, budgeting $1,400 per mile. New York has to clear 19,000 lane miles and budgets $4,000 per mile, almost three times as much.

Snowforce:
District officials deployed 1,200 employees and 727 pieces of equipment to clear streets. New York sent out 4,600 workers and more than 2,000 pieces of equipment, keeping its crews on 12-hour shifts so that half were on the streets at a time.

Consequences:



According to an analysis by Moody's, the Washington Metro area lost $570 million due to the storm through Monday, about a quarter of the total economic activity for that three-day stretch. By contrast, the New York metro area lost $460 million—roughly 7 percent of its economic activity.

"I know other cities struggled," New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said. "We are so blessed to have the personnel, the training, the equipment that allows to this city to turn on a dime. Things are not entirely normal, today but most of the city is operating well."

Asked why New York schools are open while the District's are closed, Washington's emergency management director, Christopher Geldart, said "It's a total unfair comparison."

"Is it a safe situation for those children that get there? That's Mayor de Blasio's call and his folks advising him. Here in the District we know our conditions and what our roadways look like and what it's like for our residents and children out there, and we're making the best decision we can make here."

Most streets in downtown Washington were coated in a brown, slushy mess during the morning rush. Some lanes on major thoroughfares suddenly disappeared under snowbanks.

"It's incredible that these streets aren't plowed," said Robert Raben, 52, who works in public affairs in the capital. "I've lived here 25 years. Snow is not our best foot forward."

In the District's bustling Shaw neighborhood, people frustrated at not seeing plows began shoveling their street, like suburbanites taking care of their driveways.

Obama bans solitary confinement for juveniles in fed prisons

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama said Monday he will ban the use of solitary confinement for juvenile and low-level offenders in federal prisons, citing the potential for "devastating, lasting psychological consequences" from the use of the isolation as punishment.

"It has been linked to depression, alienation, withdrawal, a reduced ability to interact with others and the potential for violent behavior," Obama wrote in an op-ed posted Monday evening on The Washington Post's website. "Some studies indicate that it can worsen existing mental illnesses and even trigger new ones. Prisoners in solitary are more likely to commit suicide, especially juveniles and people with mental illnesses."

Obama asked the Justice Department to review the use of solitary confinement last summer, as part of the administration's increased focus on the criminal justice system. Activists have been pushing for changes to the prison system.

The department review yielded a series of recommendations and 50 "guiding principles," which officials said would aim to ensure solitary confinement was an increasingly rare punishment used as an option of last resort when inmates posed a danger to staff, other inmates or themselves.

The changes would also expand treatment for the mentally ill and ensure that inmates in solitary can spend more time outside their cells.

Obama said the reforms would affect roughly 10,000 inmates in the federal system. Roughly 100,000 people are in solitary confinement in the U.S., he said, adding that he hoped the changes would serve as a model for reforms at the state level.

Some states already are making changes.

New York prison officials agreed last month to overhaul the use of solitary confinement with reforms aimed at reducing the number of inmates sent to restrictive housing. Facing a lawsuit, California agreed in September to stop the practice of isolating gang leaders for unlimited periods. Mississippi, Arizona and Ohio have agreed to changes under legal pressure.

Expert: Escaped California inmates must have had inside help

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP)—Three California inmates who sawed through a metal grate, crawled through plumbing tunnels and shimmied to freedom down a rope made from bed linens likely had help to pull off the daring plan and also benefited from the complacency of jail staff, security experts said Monday.

The inmates vanished early Friday in a jail break eerily similar to the escape of two inmates from an upstate New York prison last summer. Those men also cut through a portion of wall hidden under a bunk bed and used piping and tunnels inside the facility to reach the outside.

The California inmates, including one who is charged with murder, were still at large Monday. Jail officials did not realize they were missing until roughly 16 hours after they were last seen because an evening headcount was delayed by an assault on a guard.

A major question for investigators will be how the men were able to plan and execute their flight with such precision, said Kevin Tamez, a managing partner for MPM Group, a Philadelphia-based firm that consults on prison security, management and infrastructure.

It's likely someone slipped them blueprints or told them how the bowels of the jail were laid out, he said.

"If I were whoever's investigating, there are some people who would be on a polygraph, I guarantee you," Tamez said. "They had to have had some inside help."

Lt. Jeff Hallock, a spokesman for the Orange County Sheriff's Department, said there is no evidence so far that the trio had help from the inside but authorities know it's a possibility.

Jonathan Tieu, 20, Bac Duong, 43, and Hossein Nayeri, 37, were all awaiting trials for unrelated violent crimes at the Men's Central Jail. They were held in a dormitory with about 65 other men.

They cut through a quarter-inch-thick grill on a dormitory wall and got into plumbing tunnels before sawing through half-inch-thick steel bars as they made their way behind walls to an unguarded area of a roof atop a five-story building. There, they moved aside razor wire and rappelled to the ground using the bed linen.

It was the first escape in nearly three decades from the California facility built in 1968. The jail holds 900 men and is located in Santa Ana, about 30 miles southeast of Los Angeles.

Grand jury indicts leader behind Planned Parenthood videos

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—A Houston grand jury investigating undercover footage of Planned Parenthood found no wrongdoing Monday by the abortion provider, and instead indicted anti-abortion activists involved in making the videos that targeted the handling of fetal tissue in clinics and provoked outrage among Republican leaders nationwide.

David Daleiden, founder of the Center for Medical Progress, was indicted on a felony charge of tampering with a governmental record and a misdemeanor count related to purchasing human organs. Another activist, Sandra Merritt, was also indicted on a charge of tampering with a governmental record, which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

It's the first time anyone in the group has been charged criminally since the release of the videos, which began surfacing last year and alleged that Planned Parenthood sold fetal tissue to researchers for a profit in violation of federal law. Planned Parenthood officials have denied any wrongdoing and have said the videos were misleadingly edited.

The footage from the clinic in Houston showed people pretending to be from a company called BioMax that procures fetal tissue for research touring the facility. Planned Parenthood has previously said that the fake company sent an agreement offering to pay the "astronomical amount" of $1,600 for organs from a fetus. The clinic said it never entered into the agreement and ceased contact with BioMax because it was "disturbed" by the overtures.

In a statement announcing the indictment, Harris County District Attorney Devon Anderson did not provide details on the charges, including what record or records were allegedly tampered with and why Daleiden faces a charge related to buying human organs. Her office said it could not disclose more information and a court spokesman said it was unclear whether copies of the indictments, which typically provide more insight, would be made public Monday.

Asia

Metal on Thai beach likely to be rocket, not plane part

AP
Thai people look at a large chunk of metal found on a beach in Nakhon Si Thammarat province, Thailand, Sunday, Jan. 24, 2016.

TOKYO (AP)—A Japanese rocket maker said Monday that a large piece of metal that washed up on a beach in Thailand is likely part of a rocket launched by Japan, not a missing Malaysian plane.

The discovery of the metal sparked speculation that it might be from Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which disappeared almost two years ago.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries said the metal piece is "highly likely" to be part of a Japanese H-IIA or H-IIB rocket that was launched from southern Japan, based on an initial examination of photos and videos of the object.

Company spokeswoman Sayo Suwashita said officials are trying to determine which rocket and its launch date. Rocket debris falls into the ocean after every launch, and most is collected but sometimes pieces can be found some distance from the launch site, including in foreign waters, she said.

Thai air force and civil aviation authorities said Monday they were unaware of the statement from Japan, while the agency within the Transport Ministry that investigates aviation accidents was unavailable for comment.

Japan has launched H-IIA and H-IIB rockets since the 2000s. The most recent H-IIA launch was in November 2015.

Flight 370 took off from Malaysia in March 2014. It lost communications and made a sharp turn away from its Beijing destination before disappearing. It is presumed to have crashed in the southern Indian Ocean, far away from Thailand.

The debris was found on the eastern coast of southern Thailand's Nakhon Si Thammarat province, about 370 miles (600 kilometers) south of Bangkok on the Gulf of Thailand.

Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said Sunday that the search for the missing jet, which carried 239 people, is ongoing in the Indian Ocean and that its second phase is expected to be completed by June. Australia has led a multinational search that has so far cost more than $120 million.

Aviation experts from Malaysia visited Nakhon Si Thammarat on Monday to inspect the metal piece, after which the Thai air force flew it to Bangkok for further examination.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau announced Monday that the search of 120 square kilometers (46,000 square miles) of seabed where the Boeing 777 is thought to have crashed had been set back after a ship lost its sonar equipment.

The Fugro Discovery, one of three ships conducting the search, towed its side-scan sonar unit on Sunday into a mud volcano that rose 2,200 meters (7,200 feet) from the sea floor, the bureau said in a statement.

The ship lost the sonar unit plus 4.5 kilometers (14,800 feet) of cable. The ship is now making a six-day journey to the Australian port of Fremantle to collect new cable and will continue the search with spare sonar equipment, it said.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Malaysian PM cleared of wrongdoing in $700M scandal

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia's attorney general says nearly $700 million channeled into Prime Minister Najib Razak's private accounts was a personal donation from Saudi Arabia's royal family, and cleared him of any criminal wrongdoing. The announcement capped months of uncertainty for Najib, who has come under intense pressure to resign over the financial scandal in his biggest political crisis since he took power in 2009. Attorney General Mohamed Apandi Ali says investigations by the country's anti-corruption agency showed that no criminal offence was committed as the $681 million transferred into Najib's accounts in early 2013 was "given without any consideration" by the Saudi royal family as a personal donation. He said Tuesday that Najib returned $620 million to the Saudi royal family in August 2013 as it wasn't utilized.

China releases, deports Swede detained over rights group

BEIJING (AP)—The Chinese government has released and deported a Swedish man it accused of training and funding unlicensed lawyers in the country, leading to an extraordinary taped confession broadcast on state television. Swedish embassy spokesman Sebastian Magnusson confirmed Tuesday that Peter Dahlin had left China but was unable to provide further details. Dahlin, co-founder of China Urgent Action Working Group, was featured in a 10-minute segment on state broadcaster CCTV last week in which he confessed to helping unlicensed lawyers take on cases against the government "in clear violation of the law." He was arrested Jan. 3 on his way to Beijing's international airport, becoming the first foreigner to become entangled in a wide-ranging crackdown on the country's increasingly assertive legal rights movement.

Japan's emperor visiting the PH, a former WWII site

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's emperor said Tuesday that his nation must remember the tremendous loss of life in the Philippines during World War II, as he and his wife embarked for a four-day visit to the Southeast Asian country.

"Many Filipinos, Americans and Japanese lost their lives in the Philippines during the war," Emperor Akihito said in a short statement he read before departing from Tokyo. "Especially in the battle in Manila, a tremendously large number of innocent Filipino civilians were victims. Upon making this visit, we need to bear this in mind at all times."

Japan occupied the Philippines during World War II. The 1945 battle for Manila between the Japanese and U.S. and Philippine forces leveled the capital city.

The 82-year-old Akihito will pay his respects at memorials for both the Philippine and the Japanese war dead.

He is the son of former Emperor Hirohito, under whose name Japan waged World War II. Akihito was 11 years old at the end of the war.

His role is symbolic and he holds no political power. He is relatively popular with the Japanese public. His wife, Empress Michiko, was the first commoner to marry into the Japanese royal family.

Japan-Philippines relations have improved dramatically in the seven decades since the war. Japan has become a major aid donor to the Philippines, and the countries are developing defense ties in the face of China's military rise.

The emperor's trip follows visits to the World War II battle sites of Palau last year and Saipan in 2005. He also prayed for Japanese and U.S. war-dead in Iwo Jima in 1994.

Vietnam Communist Party on track for smooth power transition

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—Vietnam's ruling Communist Party was on track Tuesday for a smooth power transition after settling a power struggle between the party chief and the pro-business prime minister trying to unseat him.

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung effectively withdrew from the contest to become the Communist Party general secretary, clearing the way for his rival to keep the post in what appears to be a compromise to present a united front to the nation, delegates at a party congress said Monday.

The drama began after Dung was excluded from an official list of candidates for positions in the Central Committee that will be elected Tuesday. In an apparently orchestrated move, his supporters then nominated him on Sunday in a last-minute challenge. But according to party rules Dung was required to turn down the nomination since he was not an official candidate.

Dung abided by the party rules and refused the nomination. The congress then formally voted to accept his refusal. Had he wished, Dung could have tried to pull together enough support on the congress floor to have his refusal rejected. In that scenario, he might have won a place in the Central Committee, and then would have been in contention for party general secretary.

The path is now clear for Nguyen Phu Trong to stay as general secretary, the de facto top position in Vietnam's collective leadership.

The delegates were presented with 220 candidates late Monday, of whom 180 were elected to the Central Committee, one of the two pillars of the ruling establishment. The names of the winning candidates were not immediately announced, but Trong is almost certainly one of them.

Later this week, the congress will elect the all-powerful Politburo, which handles the day-to-day governance of Vietnam. It is expected that the Politburo will be expanded from the current 16 members to 18.

Of the Politburo members, one will be chosen general secretary. Three others will be chosen, in respective order of seniority, the prime minister, the president and the chairman of the National Assembly.

Trong had been trying unsuccessfully for years to sideline Dung, and while contests for the top post are not unheard of, they are usually settled well ahead of the party congress, which takes place once every five years to choose new leaders.

But this year the rivalry between Dung and Trong extended into the party congress, which ends Thursday, although regardless of who is in power the fundamental makeup of the government and its policies will not change radically, according to analysts.

World

Libya lost $68B from attacks on oil, industry chief says

LONDON (AP)—Libya will fall further into chaos if its factions don't quickly form a unity government, the head of the state oil company warned Monday, noting the country has already lost some $68 billion in oil sales amid political infighting.

Mustafa Sanalla, who is in London to attend a conference and get support from investors, made his comments just after the internationally recognized parliament in the divided country rejected a plan to move toward a unified government. The vote underscored the turmoil that continues to wrack Libya.

Sanalla argued that without a single government, there will be "neither security nor stability."

"This vacuum will permit the other terrorist group and extremist groups to step in," he told The Associated Press.

The appeal came a week after representatives of Libya's rival factions announced they would attempt to create a government of unity to stabilize a country engulfed in chaos since the 2011 death of dictator Moammar Gadhafi. The United Nations is trying to broker a single government featuring the country's two factions—the Islamist one in the capital, Tripoli, and the internationally backed one in the eastern part of the country.

AP

In this Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2014, file photo, damages are seen due to clashes between the Libyan military and Islamic militias in Benghazi, Libya.

With each side backed by its own fighters, the Libyans allied with the Islamic State group have gained strength, claiming responsibility for a series of deadly attacks and attacking oil terminals and fields, the sole source of Libya's wealth.

"This problem in Libya, it is not so sophisticated," Sanalla said after the first day of the conference at Chatham House. "We have two factions in Libya. They are not looking (out) for the interests of Libya, unfortunately."

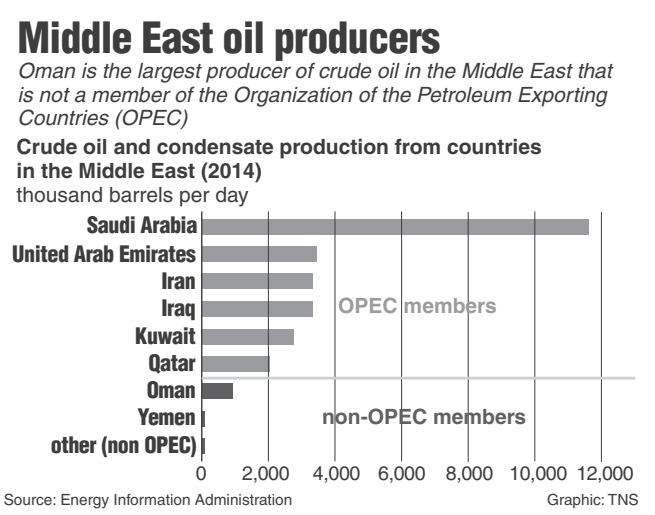
Aside from the obvious turmoil a dysfunctional government provides, the troubles also mean extremists are gaining strength. Islamic State militants have been attacking Libyan oil facilities since the start of the year.

Sanalla said the group doesn't want to hold the facilities, but disable them. His $68 billion estimate of lost production and exports since 2013 does not include damage and losses from the fire at the big port of Ras Lanuf last week or to any other facilities.

Instead of blaming Islamic State alone, he levelled his most harsh criticisms at the Petroleum Facilities Guard, the force that is meant to protect oil facilities.

Describing the 27,000 member force as more of a hindrance than an asset to keeping such sites secure, he suggested that while they may not be directly allied to Islamic State, they share the same goal: keeping the country destabilized.

He demanded that the guards be incorporated into a professional and unified structure Islamic State will "attack and destroy more facilities." He suggested that with their ouster, production would be doubled within days.



Amnesty: Dozens of juvenile offenders face death in Iran

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Dozens of people who were arrested in Iran for crimes committed before they turned 18 remain at risk of the death penalty despite recent reforms, with many having already spent years on death row, according to a report by Amnesty International released on Tuesday.

The London-based group also found that Iran has executed at least 73 juvenile offenders between 2005 and 2015, including at least four last year.

Amnesty's 110-page report intensifies pressure on Iran at a time when Tehran is working to rebuild relations with the West following last year's landmark nuclear deal. The agreement came into force this month after Iran took steps to curb its nuclear program, leading to the lifting of crippling international sanctions.

On Monday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani arrived in Rome at the start of the first European trip by an Iranian president in almost two decades. The visit, which will also include stops at the Vatican and France, is expected to lead to a raft of business and trade deals.

Iran is one of the world's largest users of the death penalty, ranking second behind China in 2014, according to the most recent figures from Amnesty. Most executions overall in Iran are carried out for drug smuggling. The country straddles a major narcotics trafficking route linking opium-producing fields in Afghanistan to Europe.

Amnesty's researchers were able to identify the names and locations of 49 juvenile offenders who face the death penalty, though the group notes that actual numbers could be higher. A 2014 U.N. report put the number of juvenile offenders at risk of execution at more than 160.

The majority of the 73 juvenile offenders Amnesty identified who were put to death over the past decade were convicted of murder. Others were executed for crimes such as rape, drug-related crimes and national security offenses such as "enmity against God."

The group noted that reforms introduced in 2013 give judges more discretion to take into account juvenile offenders' mental maturity and potentially impose less harsh punishments, and that the Supreme Court has since said juvenile offenders facing execution could have their cases retried. Additional reforms introduced last year require that cases involving juveniles must be heard in special juvenile courts.

Cameroon: 4 suicide attackers kill at least 35 people

YAOUNDE, Cameroon (AP)—Four suicide bombers attacked a market and town on Monday in Cameroon's Far North region near the border with Nigeria, killing at least 35 people and wounding 65 others, officials said.

Cameroon officials blamed the Nigeria-based extremist group Boko Haram for the attack, saying the assailants crossed over from Nigeria. In response, Cameroon soldiers carried out raids into Nigeria from the Cameroonian town of Achigashia, killing at least 17 insurgents, Cameroon's Minister of Communications Issa Tchiroma Bakary said Monday night.

"The suicide bombers were escorted to Cameroon by Boko Haram fighters," Bakary said. "We must trace them wherever they are."

Two of the suicide bombers targeted the market of the Cameroonian border town of Bodo and two others detonated explosives in town, said the region's governor, Midjiyawa Bakari. The wounded have been taken to hospitals in the northern Cameroon city of Kousseri, he said.

Suicide bombers have killed dozens in the region in the past month. On Jan. 18, a 14-year-old suicide bomber attacked a mosque in the region, killing four—the fifth attack on a mosque in Cameroon in less than a month.

Boko Haram militants began stepping up attacks early last year on neighboring Cameroon, Niger and Chad, countries contributing to efforts to crush Boko Haram.

Boko Haram joined the Islamic State group in March. On Monday, the IS-linked Amaq News Agency posted a message reporting suicide bombings in northern Cameroon, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadi websites. The message said the attacks on Bodo village targeted "gatherings of the militias allied with the army operating on the border with Nigeria."

UN envoy lowers expectations ahead of Syria talks on Friday

GENEVA (AP)—Lowering expectations about his ability to help end Syria's civil war, the U.N. special envoy announced talks between government and opposition representatives will start on Friday to embark on a six-month process that he hopes will include civil society and women's groups.

Staffan de Mistura raised nearly as many questions as he answered in a news conference in Geneva on Monday, the day when talks had originally been set to begin before tensions over who would be invited, involving countries like Russia and Turkey, forced a delay. He also confirmed comments from U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry last week that the two main sides won't meet face-to-face initially in the "proximity" talks.

De Mistura insisted he was sticking to Security Council decisions to shun some groups like the Islamic State group and al-Qaida-affiliate Nusra Front, but refused any clarification beyond that. He said invitations would go out Tuesday, but declined to specify his criteria about deciding who receives them.

"We want to make sure that when and if we start, to start at least on the right foot," said de Mistura, who succeeded Kofi Annan and Lakhdar Brahimi as the top U.N. envoy for Syria. "It will be uphill anyway."

The step-by-step approach testifies to the immense difficulties that many diplomats and world powers have faced in efforts to end the nearly five-year war that has cost more than 250,000 lives, forced millions to flee their homes to places like Europe, and opened the way for IS to seize vast territory in Syria and Iraq.

"The first priority will be the focus of the talks of what most Syrians—if not all—want to hear: The possibility of a broad cease-fire, and the possibility of stopping the threat of ISIL, and therefore, thanks to a broader cease-fire, an increase of humanitarian aid," he said, using another acronym for IS.

Learning from past failures and missteps, de Mistura jettisoned an initiative of four "working groups" on various aspects of Syria's crisis led by Europeans which he launched last summer. He also insisted the new talks didn't amount to "Geneva III," an allusion to earlier rounds of unsuccessful discussions.

De Mistura predicted "a lot of shuttling because there are not only different delegations but also civil society, women and others who deserve to be heard ... So you could have quite a lot of simultaneous meetings taking place."

"We want to make sure that there is a substantial presence of women to advise me and make sure we are in the right position for the future of Syria," he added.

Focus

AP

In this Nov. 13, 2015, file photo, a woman is evacuated from the Bataclan concert hall after gunmen attacked the venue in Paris.

EU police warn that more attacks by **IS militants** are likely

By LORI HINNANT and JOHN-THOR DAHLBURG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS (AP)—Europe's top police agency issued a stark warning Monday: Islamic State extremists will keep attempting lethal attacks on soft targets in Europe as the militant group increasingly goes global.

Some 2½ months after suicide bombers and gunmen killed 130 people in Paris, the Europol agency said, "there is every reason to expect that IS, IS-inspired terrorists or another religiously inspired terrorist group will undertake a terrorist attack somewhere in Europe again, but particularly in France, intended to cause mass casualties among the civilian population."

The sobering conclusions reached by experts from the European Union's chief agency for law enforcement cooperation and EU member states make clear that many, perhaps virtually all in Europe, may be at risk.

"Without reliable intelligence on the intentions, activities and contacts and travels of known terrorists it is nearly impossible to exactly predict when and where the next terrorist attack will take place, and what form it will take," the Europol report said.

Hours before the report was issued, a new video was released by the Islamic State group celebrating the killers who carried out the Nov. 13 attacks in the French capital—while also threatening fresh bloodshed.

The grisly recording ends with one militant holding a severed head, footage of British Prime Minister David Cameron giving a speech, and an IS warning that whoever stands with the unbelievers "will be a target for our swords."

The 17-minute video, released Sunday, shows the extent of the planning that went into the multiple attacks in Paris, which French authorities have said from the beginning were planned in Syria. All nine men seen in the video died in the Paris attacks or their aftermath.

All but two of the attackers were from Belgium and France and spoke fluent French. The two others—identified by their noms de guerre as Iraqis—spoke in Arabic.

Seven of the militants, including a 20-year-old who was the youngest of the group, were shown standing behind bound captives, described as "apostates," who were either beheaded or shot.

"Soon on the Champs-Elysees," says Samy Amimour, who was raised in a Paris suburb, as he holds a captive's head aloft.

The Nov. 13 attacks targeted a packed concert hall, a restaurant and cafe, and a soccer match at the French national stadium. The video glorifying the Kalashnikov-wielding gunmen and suicide bombers responsible for that carnage was probably also meant as a recruitment tool.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said Monday's Europol report did not go markedly beyond previous warnings and was not intended to sow fear but "to look lucidly at reality."

Gilles Kepel, a political scientist who wrote "Terrorism in France," said even if Islamic State extremists carry out new attacks in Europe, the video shows the group is increasingly desperate and likely on the wane - in part because of the indiscriminate killings Nov. 13.

"They emphasize their ability to be cruel, to kill all their opponents and to terrorize everyone. But what is very striking is that I do not believe that they will have a significant amount of new sympathizers after those videos," he said.

"I believe that it's not really a display of strength. It's rather a display of weakness. Terrorism has its political economy of sorts. You have to terrorize people. On the one hand, you have to spread terror, but at the same time you have to gather sympathizers. If you're not able to have the two going together, then the model fails," he added.

But releasing the video draws attention anew to attacks that terrorized central Paris and shows the group's ability to turn Europeans against their homelands in a relatively short time, said Magnus Ranstorp, a counterterrorism expert at the Swedish National Defence College. The youngest of the group, a 20-year-old, had been in Syria only since February.

"They were not only battle-hardened but they were cruel. Their threshold for killing was low. They wouldn't blink to kill," Ranstorp said. He said the video's release two months after the attacks fell into a typical delay by Islamic State's propaganda apparatus.

Expert reviews conducted by Europol on Nov. 29 and

Dec. 1 concluded that the Islamic State "is preparing more terrorist attacks," including copycats of the so-called Mumbai method of coordinated bombings and shootings by multiple teams of assailants that claimed 164 lives in India's financial capital in November 2008.

"The attacks will be primarily directed at soft targets, because of the impact it generates," the Europol report said. "Both the November Paris attacks and the October 2015 bombing of a Russian airliner suggest a shift in IS strategy toward going global."

Numerous independent analysts have conjectured that as Islamic State has increasingly lost ground in Iraq and Syria, including to a U.S.-led international coalition and the Russian military, it has lashed out at its foes abroad.

IS commanders are given tactical freedom depending on local circumstances, making it much harder to detect plots, the report said. That degree of liberty, it said, makes it harder for law enforcement "to detect such plans and identifying the people involved at an early stage."

Calling the danger of extremist violence "the most significant in over 10 years," Europol on Monday also officially opened a new European Counter Terrorism Center at its headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands. Europol director Rob Wainwright said the new unit will have 40-50 experts in counterterrorism and deal in intelligence-sharing, tracking foreign fighters and sources of illegal financing and firearms, and assisting EU countries in counterterrorism actions and investigations.

Wainwright told a news conference in Amsterdam that over 5,000 EU nationals have been radicalized by fighting with Muslim extremists in Iraq and Syria, and that many have returned home to present a clear and present danger to public safety.

"The current threat demands a strong and ambitious response from the EU," Europol's chief said, referring to the experts' warnings of IS plans for "large-scale attacks on a global stage with a particular focus on targeting Europe."

The IS video released Sunday was shot before the men sneaked back into Europe and contains no footage of the attackers during the days of terror that began Nov. 13 and ended only on Nov. 18 with the death of Abdelhamid Abbaoud, who was believed to be the leader of the attack cell.

Instead, it was assembled from material shot before the men left for Paris, news video and amateur video. The video did not specify where the nine men were filmed, but it was believed to have been in IS-controlled territory in Syria. Abbaoud is seen simply speaking in a room.

One militant, Brahim Abdeslam, is seen at a makeshift shooting range. Abdeslam, whose brother Salah fled Paris that night and remains at large, blew himself up at a Paris cafe where he was the only victim. Salah Abdeslam is not seen in the video.

Kepel, an expert in Islamic extremism, predicted the Islamic State's long-term prospects were dim not just in Europe, but in the very territory it most wants to control in Iraq and Syria.

Wages of the fighters have been cut in two because the militants "have no access to the smuggling of oil—the oil rigs have been bombed and destroyed," he said. "That's one thing. And the morale is not very high. This is one of the reasons they try to boost the morale with those horrendous videos."

Though graphic, it left Parisians uncowed in the neighborhood where the carnage unfolded the night of Nov. 13, including at the Carillon cafe, where gunman targeted customers out for the evening.

"It's part of their propaganda. This is one of their methods. Of course it's pretty strong because pictures carry a lot of weight," said Gerard Faure. "But I don't think that here, people I know in this neighborhood, Parisians as a whole are not really afraid."

Good Housekeeping

DIGGIN' IN: Gardening trends come and go—just like fashion—and 2016 is no exception

By KATHY VAN MULLEKOM
DAILY PRESS

Just like you sync your tablet or smart phone to cloud-like backup systems, gardening will sync with Mother Nature to create a more perfect natural world, according to Susan McCoy, trend spotter and president of Garden Media Group—www.gardenmediagroup.com.

"We walk, talk and sleep with our phones," says McCoy in a news release.

"Now, people are getting plugged in outside, too, syncing garden habits with technology and garden hobbyist with each other. People want to be successful with plants without a lot of work or information. To do this, they are turning to technology to help grow plants both indoors and in the garden."

Armed with apps

"Consumers are utilizing technology in the garden," says Joan Casanova, spokeswoman for Bonnie Plants, a brand of vegetable, flower and herb plants sold at garden centers locally and nationwide.

"Instead of technology being a distraction it is instead a pocket-sized garden tool to learn and share food gardening experiences."

The Bonnie Plants, "Homegrown" app acts as a resource for gardeners of all levels – novice to expert, according to Casanova, thanks to these features:

■ Notes — Track your garden's progress through the season, including planting, watering, feeding, pests, and harvesting.

■ Reminders — Set notifications so you never forget an essential garden task.

■ Photos — Create a visual history of everything you grow.

■ My Garden/Catalog — Browse info on more than 250 veggies and herbs, then create a personalized list.

■ Choosers — Use the Tomato and Pepper Choosers to find just the right varieties to grow.

■ Weather — See current and predicted weather for your locale, including rainfall.

■ Learn to Grow — Access a series of guides that provide the basics for success.

■ Sharing — Quickly and easily share triumphs, challenges, and lessons learned with friends and family on social channels.

■ Hands-Free — Go nearly hands-free in the garden with the dictation feature.

You can enter every plant you have, what date you planted it and keep tabs on how it's doing, too, like your own personal garden journal right in your pocket. The app is free on the iTunes App Store. To learn more about the app and download for free, visit: www.bonnieplants.com.

MCT
Succulents are easy-grow plants indoors and outdoors.

Easy peasy plants

Succulents in anything are showing at all the gardening trade shows and magazines, according to Tish Llaneza, owner of Countryside Gardens in Hampton, Va. –http://countrysidegardens.biz.

"They are really taking off," says Llaneza who goes to trends and buying shows up and down the East Coast annually.

"Both indoor varieties and outdoor are becoming more and more popular, using them in terrariums, high heels, coffee cups and hanging orbs, just to name a few indoor uses."

Teresa Bennett, owner of online Gardens by Teresa — www.gardensbyteresa.com — in Yorktown, Va., agrees.

"Succulents are drought tolerant, easy care, both for those that are hardy in this area and the tender varieties. They also come in an amazing array of textures and colors. Even the cuttings from many succulents make extremely long-lasting arrangements."

Pollinator gardens

Pollinator-friendly gardens remain huge, according to Diane Blazek, executive director of the All-America Selections —http://all-americaselections.org — and the National Garden Bureau — http://ngb.org.

"If you have a vegetable garden, don't' forget the plants that attract the pollinators who do their job and help you get cucumbers, tomatoes, pumpkins, etc.," says Blazek. The National Garden Bureau is one of a couple dozen organizations supporting the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge managed by The National Pollinator Garden Network to register pollinator-friendly gardens at http://millionpollinatorgardens.org/

"Without pollinators, your edibles suffer and do not properly mature.

"And, pollinators don't have to be just native plants. Yes, natives are important but many annuals can be just as beneficial. It's important to understand the many different types of pollinators and their pollen and nectar needs at different life stages."

Living Smart: Choosing bathroom tile that's trendy and timeless

By JAMES FIGY
ANGIE'S LIST

Jumping headfirst into the latest bathroom tile trend runs the risk of falling out of vogue, leaving the bathroom looking dated.

Since tile lasts 20 to 30 years — longer than bathtub surrounds or vinyl flooring — homeowners don't need to update as often, says Carlos Martinez, first officer of C-Bek Tile & Stone Design in North Hollywood, California. So homeowners should consider a trend's staying power when planning a bathroom remodel.

Tile color trends

Despite the number of flashy colors available, the standards still reign supreme. Minimizing tile colors doesn't minimize options, says Kevin McDaniel, director of product design and development for The Tile Shop in Minneapolis.

"Grey, white and 'greige' colors continue to grow in popularity," he says. "Low-contrast palettes with minimum coloration are still the predominant trend."

Trendy porcelain tiles gain popularity

Porcelain tile catches the eye with its good looks and relatively low cost. Larry Bushner, owner of Masterpiece Tile & Grout in Arlington, Texas, has noticed more homeowners requesting porcelain tile.

"This can look like stone without the additional costs of installation, purchase price and maintenance," he says, adding porcelain tile costs slightly more than ceramic tile.

Porcelain faces no shortage of style either, Martinez says. Besides the stone look, manufacturers are creating contemporary and classic product lines in porcelain, which doesn't stain like other tile types, he says.

"They're getting so good at (manufacturing) porcelain," Martinez says. "That's why it's popping right now."

McDaniel says The Tile Shop has seen increased demand for porcelain, and the company will release a line of Travertine Ivory porcelain tile early next year. However, with stone's classic appeal and certain glazing techniques only possible with ceramic tile, those two won't disappear, he says.

Trendy glass tile becomes a staple

Glass tile has proved its staying power, becoming a timeless classic in its own rite, according to McDaniel. Now, designs that combine glass with other materials are gaining momentum, he says.

"Newer water-jet technology allows for unique shapes, sizing and combination of materials that was unthinkable a few years ago," he says.

Angie's List member A. Weiss of Skokie, Illinois, chose 3-by-9-inch blue glass tile for the top half of her bathroom walls to accent the main 12-by-24-inch porcelain tile.

Weiss researched a plethora of tile options online before beginning the modernizing master bathroom remodel, which features a large corner tub and shower with glass walls. She and her husband needed to replace moldy, flaking-beyond-help slate tile in the shower, installed before they bought the house.

"We have a transitional/modern style for the most part, so we wanted clean lines and a bit of a spa feel," Weiss says. "Having done a lot of research online, we decided on a glass and porcelain look."

In Loving Memory of

†AURELIO TORRES MENDIOLA

Lovingly Known as "LOLONG"

In his new life, he now joins his:
Father: †Antonio Babauta Mendiola
Mother: †Dolores Torres Mendiola
Father In-Law: †Juan Cruz Pangelinan
Mother In-Law: †Consolacion Concepcion Pangelinan
Brother In-Law: †Vicente Concepcion Pangelinan

His Memories will live forever in the hearts of his:
Wife: Asuncion "Connie" Pangelinan Mendiola
Children: Patrick Pangelinan Mendiola & Jocelyn Blas
(Mardyann Joyvette, Aurel Joe, Ayesha Josie, Connie Noreen, Pattylyn Mae)
Anthony John Pangelinan Mendiola
Allen Junior Pangelinan Mendiola
Melda Consolacion Pangelinan Mendiola
Andrew Jason Pangelinan Mendiola

Brothers, Sisters, and In-Laws:
Felix Torres/Lou Mafnas & Children
Carmen M./Michael Pitts & Children
Pedro T. Mendiola & Children
Edward T. Mendiola
Bernadita T. Mendiola/Vicente T. Ada & Children
Felipe T. Mendiola/Kathy B. Mira & Children

Brothers & Sisters In-Law:
Lourdes C. Pangelinan & Children
Rosa M. Pangelinan & Children
Lucia C. Pangelinan & Children
Lorenzo M. Pangelinan/Margarita Fujihira & Son
Nora B./Antonio Bornilla & Children

He will also be missed by his numerous uncles, aunts, nieces, nephew, cousins and friends.

Mass of Intention is being offered at 6:00 p.m. at San Vicente Church on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Mass will be offered at the Holy Rosary Station of the Cross on Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. in Dan Dan.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2016. His remains will be escorted at 7:30 a.m. from Borja Funeral home to Mt. Carmel Cathedral. Holy Rosary will be prayed at 8:00 a.m. followed by the Responso service. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. followed by Internment service at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Please join us in prayers,
Thank you – Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Asuncion Pangelinan Mendiola & Children

Life & Style

Box office top 20: 'The Revenant' on top with $16 million

AP

This photo provided by courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox shows, Leonardo DiCaprio as Hugh Glass, in a scene from the film, "The Revenant," directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu.

NEW YORK (AP)—In its third week of wide-release, Alejandro Inarritu's Oscar-nominated "The Revenant" rose to the top of box office with $16 million, according to final studio figures Monday.

"The Revenant" ascended to no. 1 amid the kind of snowy conditions central to the frigid and brutal 1820s frontier thriller. The snowstorm that battered the East Coast—and caused hundreds of movie theaters to temporarily close—took approximately a 10 percent bite out of overall North America receipts.

Last week's top film, the Kevin Hart-Ice Cube comedy "Ride Along 2," dipped heavily to third with $12.5 million in its second week. A trio of poorly reviewed new releases—"Dirty Grandpa," ''The Boy" and "The 5th Wave"—all struggled to make a dent.

The top 20 movies at U.S. and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by Rentrak:

1. **"The Revenant,"** 20th Century Fox, $16,009,718, 3,711 locations, $4,314 average, $119,202,240, 5 weeks.
2. **"Star Wars: The Force Awakens,"** Disney, $14,078,648, 3,365 locations, $4,184 average, $879,110,994, 6 weeks.
3. **"Ride Along 2,"** Universal, $12,456,050, 3,192 locations, $3,902 average, $58,606,090, 2 weeks.
4. **"Dirty Grandpa,"** Lionsgate, $11,111,875, 2,912 locations, $3,816 average, $11,111,875, 1 week.
5. **"The Boy,"** STX Entertainment, $10,778,392, 2,671 locations, $4,035 average, $10,778,392, 1 week.
6. **"The 5th Wave,"** Sony, $10,326,356, 2,908 locations, $3,551 average, $10,326,356, 1 week.
7. **"13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers Of Benghazi,"** Paramount, $9,030,400, 2,917 locations, $3,096 average, $32,763,829, 2 weeks.
8. **"Daddy's Home,"** Paramount, $4,940,848, 2,789 locations, $1,772 average, $138,451,113, 5 weeks.
9. **"Norm Of The North,"** Lionsgate, $3,828,087, 2,411 locations, $1,588 average, $14,024,290, 2 weeks.
10. **"The Big Short,"** Paramount, $3,176,529, 1,351 locations, $2,351 average, $56,390,370, 7 weeks.
11. **"Sisters,"** Universal, $1,770,620, 1,602 locations, $1,105 average, $84,807,610, 6 weeks.
12. **"Brooklyn,"** Fox Searchlight, $1,720,675, 962 locations, $1,789 average, $27,584,996, 12 weeks.
13. **"The Forest,"** Focus Features, $1,675,558, 2,010 locations, $834 average, $24,982,975, 3 weeks.
14. **"The Hateful Eight,"** The Weinstein Company, $1,365,069, 1,277 locations, $1,069 average, $50,975,744, 5 weeks.
15. **"Room,"** A24 Films, $1,335,563, 862 locations, $1,549 average, $7,864,357, 15 weeks.
16. **"Spotlight,"** Open Road, $1,273,626, 1,030 locations, $1,237 average, $32,902,971, 12 weeks.
17. **"Joy,"** 20th Century Fox, $1,136,527, 966 locations, $1,177 average, $54,196,165, 5 weeks.
18. **"Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip,"** 20th Century Fox, $1,105,310, 1,204 locations, $918 average, $82,521,026, 6 weeks.
19. **"Airlift,"** B4U US, $878,699, 122 locations, $7,202 average, $878,699, 1 week.
20. **"Ip Man 3,"** Well Go USA, Inc., $784,839, 103 locations, $7,620 average, $784,839, 1 week.

Pope Francis answers questions from children in new book

NEW YORK (AP)—"Dear Pope Francis," 10-year-old Mohammed begins, "Will the world be again as it was in the past?"

Signed "Respectfully yours," the boy wrote from a Jesuit-run school for refugee children in Syria and was treated to a long and personal answer from the pope himself. So were 29 other children who posed questions to Francis in letters from around the globe for a new book poignantly illustrated with their own artwork.

AP

In this Sept., 24, 2015 file photo, Pope Francis shakes hands with school children as he departs the Apostolic Nunciature, the Vatican's diplomatic mission in the heart of Washington, en route Andrews Air Force Base.

The book, "Dear Pope Francis," is out March 1 from Loyola Press in Chicago. It's a project that likely wouldn't have materialized without the help of Father Antonio Spadaro, a Jesuit like the pope and the director of La Civilta Cattolica, a Roman Catholic journal published in Rome.

Tom McGrath of the Jesuit-founded publishing house co-edited the book with Spadaro after reaching out to the priest for help. Spadaro brought about 50 letters with questions to the pope so he could select 30. Spadaro sat with the pope as he responded to each. Francis often complimented the artwork of the children.

"He knows Pope Francis very well," McGrath said of Spadaro. "We tried to make it as easy for the pope as possible."

The pope's response to Mohammed spoke in part of suffering and the people who inflict it.

"There are those who manufacture weapons so that people fight each other and wage war. There are people who have hate in their hearts. There are people who are interested only in money and would sell everything for it. They would even sell other people," he wrote.

More to Mohammed's point, Francis answered: "No, when the time comes, the world will not be as it was. It will be far better than it was in the past."

Once the pope agreed to participate in the project, Loyola reached out to priests and lay people around the world to connect the publisher with children to write the letters.

The 30 kids in the book range in age from 6 to 13. In all, about 250 letters were received in 14 languages from 26 countries around the globe. The pope wound up with about 50 letters from which to choose.

"He loved the project right from the beginning," McGrath said. "He has this great affection for children, who have a great affection for him. He was surprised at the depth of the questions."

There was no condensing or editing of the pope's responses. In a 90-minute session with Spadaro last August in Rome, Francis responded verbally in a mixture of Italian and Spanish. Spadaro served as transcriber in addition to connecting Loyola Press with the Vatican.

"These are the pope's exact words," McGrath said. "At one point he mentioned, 'These are tough.' He realized that he owed the kids a deeper answer than right off the top of his head."

Spadaro said via email that the pope truly pondered when answering the children.

"Often he looked off into space and tried to imagine the child in front of him," he said. "And in his gaze I saw care, love."

Loyola will publish the book in English and Spanish. As an international Jesuit project, it will also be published simultaneously around the world, including in Brazil, Indonesia, Slovenia, Mexico and India.

In Celebration of His New Life

†Juan Diego Angailen Urumelog

Lovingly known as "JD"

September 12, 1961 – January 22, 2016

In his new life, he now join his:		*His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:*	
Father:	†Wanter Kus	**Wife:**	**Bernadita DLG. Urumelog**
Sisters:	†Herna A. Urumelog	**Children:**	**Kimberly U.** & Manuel V. Degracia (Manuel Jr.)
	†Cecilia K. Deleon Guerrero		**Jonathan** Urumelog
	†Vivian G. Wheeler		**Jocylin** Urumelog & Jacob Ilo
Brothers:	†Donald A. Urumelog	**Mother:**	Concepcion A. Urumelog
	†John Joe A. Urumelog	**Sisters:**	Antonia A. Urumelog and Family
	†Mariano Gustaf		Vivian U. Aldan and Family
Sisters-In-law:	†Remedio DLG. Villagomez		Rowena A. Urumelog
	†Rosario DLG. Villagomez	**Brothers:**	Patrick A. Urumelog
	†Elizabeth A. Deleon Guerrero		Steven A. Urumelog
	†Nini A. Deleon Guerrero		Abel Kileleman
	†Frances S. Deleon Guerrero	**Sisters-In-law:**	Angelina A. Deleon Guerrero
	†Rufina P. Deleon Guerrero		Mariana Deleon Guerrero
Brothers-In-law:	†Daniel DLG. Aldan		Ronald L. Hansen and Family
	†Jack T. Mettao		Ramona DLG. Pangelinan and Family
	†Ricardo K. Omar		Lourdes DLG. Nakazato and Family
	†Vicente A. Deleon Guerrero	**Brothers-In-law:**	Roman A. Deleon Guerrero and family
	†Pasqual A. Deleon Guerrero		Jesus A. & Visitacion (Vicky) T. Deleon Guerrero and Family
	†Jose A. Deleon Guerrero		Lorenzo A. Deleon Guerrero and family
	†Takeyo Nakazato		
	†Daniel T. Villagomez		
	†Antonio T. Villagomez		
	†Juan Pangelinan		

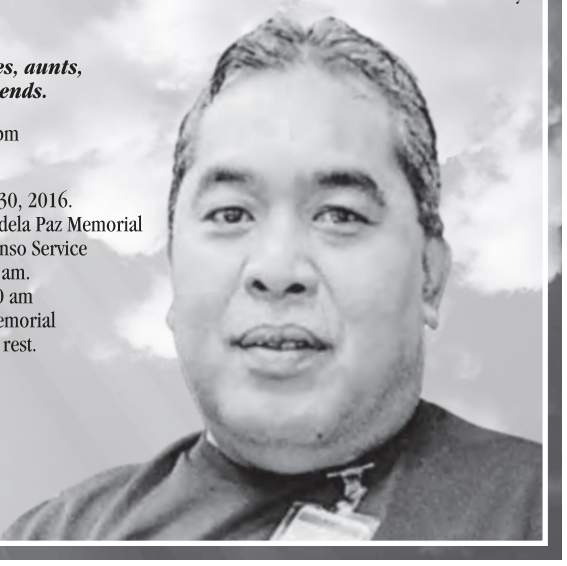
He will also be missed by numerous uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Nightly rosary for the repose of his soul is at 7:00 pm at Kristo Rai Church.

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2016. His remains will be escorted from Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel at 7:30 am to Santa Soledad Church. Responso Service will be at 8:00 am followed by Holy Rosary at 8:15 am. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 am followed by Interment service at Sanctuario Pax Memorial Gardens in Kagman, where he will be at a peaceful rest.

Un Dangkulu Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Olomwaay and Thank you.

Bernadita DLG. Urumelog, Children and Family



Effie Brown: Women need to be part of diversity solution

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)— Film and television producer Effie Brown believes that women and people of color have been complicit, at some level, in taking a backseat in Hollywood.

"Somehow, we co-signed this. Somehow, we participated," she said Monday at the annual Women at Sundance brunch.

Brown, who became a public voice for diversity and inclusion in entertainment after butting heads with Matt Damon last year in an episode of HBO's "Project Greenlight," encouraged the women in attendance to explore their own unconscious bias and "blind spots" - and then to go further.

If those who want to change the equation in Hollywood aren't taking action against the status-quo, they're supporting it, she said. Brown urged everyone in the room to "hire, mentor and invest" in women and people of color. That perspective was echoed by every speaker at the invitation-only event, including Universal Pictures chairman Donna Langley and actor/director/producer Elizabeth Banks, who discussed their rise in Hollywood and the challenges they've faced along the way.

"We are up against something," Banks said, "which is the entirety of human history."

AP

In this Aug. 10, 2015 file photo, Effie Brown attends The Project Greenlight Season 4 premiere of "The Leisure Class" at The Theatre At The Ace Hotel in Los Angeles.

Jacki Zehner, a member of the Sundance Institute's board of trustees, told brunch guests to "vote with their wallet" to support stories by and about women and people of color. Purchasing power, she said, is "the most under-used tool of social change."

The Sundance Institute has been working with Women in Film for several years to study barriers to success for female and minority filmmakers. Their research shows that women comprised only 4.2 percent of directors of the top-grossing films between 2002 and 2013.

In October, the two organizations convened a meeting of Hollywood studio, network and agency heads to discuss the issue and possible solutions. Some suggestions included unconscious bias training for entertainment-industry workers, and a "gender parity" stamp to recognize productions making significant strides in hiring women in all positions.

"Women make up half the population and people of color make up 40 percent," Brown said, taking on the presence of a preacher in front of a devoted choir. "There is no such thing as innocent bystanding anymore.

"Our voice is powerful. We are a force of nature," she said. "There's nothing more fierce on God's green earth than a woman with her mind made up."

2 Sundance films explore a journalist's on-air suicide

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)— When two movies are released at about the same time on the same subject, the topic is often something silly and big and spectacle-filled, like "Armageddon" and "Deep Impact" or "White House Down" and "Olympus Has Fallen."

But this year at the Sundance Film Festival, audiences found themselves with an unusual double feature. The Festival hosted the premieres of two films exploring the largely forgotten story of Christine Chubbuck, a 29-year-old on-air journalist in Sarasota, Florida who shot and killed herself during a live broadcast on July 15, 1974.

One, "Christine," is a fictionalized, narrative depiction of her life before the suicide starring Rebecca Hall. The other is an experimental documentary about an actress, indie mainstay Kate Lyn Sheil, preparing to portray Chubbuck called "Kate Plays Christine."

"I was kind of shocked that there had never been a movie made about it," said "Kate Plays Christine" director Robert Greene. "It's the kind of story that makes you think about why you want to know about it. I still haven't answered that to this day."

The moments before Chubbuck shot herself have been cited as the inspiration for the 1976 Sidney Lumet film "Network" and Peter Finch's mad-as-hell anchor.

On the morning of July 15, a tape from the scene of a local shooting from the night prior didn't roll. Chubbuck, sitting behind the anchor's desk, then said, "in keeping with Channel 40's policy of bringing you the latest in blood and guts and in living color, you are going to see another first—attempted suicide" before taking the gun out of her bag and pulling the trigger.

She'd even left a written news item about her own suicide on the desk.

"Christine" director Antonio Campos learned about the story when screenwriter Craig Shilowich approached him with a script.

"Craig dug very deep and tried to understand her," Campos said. "For me, having learned about it through this script made it so much more human."

Actress Rebecca Hall questioned the utility of telling the story at all but the script convinced her otherwise.

"I do think there's something quite irresponsible about glorifying something as some sort of macabre act of heroism when actually it's a tragedy and awful and she shouldn't have died," Hall said. "I read the script and thought, 'Oh, it doesn't do that. What it does is make a human case. It makes an audience understand mental illness and sympathize with it.'"

Both filmmakers and actresses had to deal with the fact that there is precious little information available about Chubbuck. They knew that she suffered from depression, that she had to go through a surgery to remove an ovary which would jeopardize her ability to have children, and that she was a virgin. But there aren't videos online readily available of Chubbuck, and the facts of the story, even in Sarasota, have blurred.

Hall had only one 20-minute taped interview to study, and even that brought up more questions than answers.

The interview is about the rezoning of a hospital and Hall said it's terribly dry. But she took what she could get and used it as a jumping-off point to study Chubbock's voice and mannerisms.

"There are a couple of heartbreaking indicators in it that were real prompters for me," Hall said. "There was this bit where she says something so impassioned and it's about something really banal."

"Kate Plays Christine" operates like a journalistic investigation into the story. They talk to co-workers, townspeople, and even visit the store (now relocated) where Chubbuck purchased the gun.

"The Christine Chubbuck story has always made me stop and take pause and made me think about presumptions I have about women, about myself, about what makes a depressed person go that far. ... It should make you really think about the people you know in your life and what they're going through and what you've gone through," said Greene. "If that's one result of these two films being made at the same time, that's just great."

Werner Herzog on ski jumping and filming in North Korea

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)— The first time Werner Herzog came to Sundance a little over a decade ago with "Grizzly Man," he asked that the Festival prepare the Olympic-sized ski jump ramps for him.

He'd grown up on skis in the Bavarian mountains and was a ski jumper in his youth.

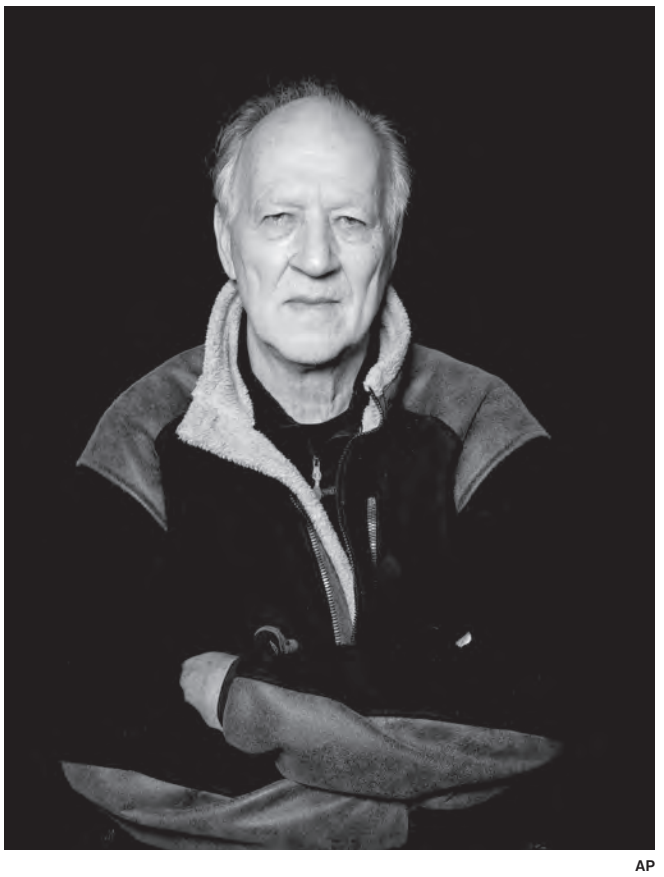
Herzog, then in his early 60s, told them simply: "I want to fly."

"I said it so seriously," Herzog recalled. "I kind of scared the Festival."

"Of course, I am too old for it and would most certainly crash.... I would fly some distance, but don't ask how I would land."

The famed documentarian returned to the Sundance Film Festival this year with "Lo and Behold: Reveries of the Connected World," a wide-eyed look at the world of the internet (and its birthplace) and technology as told through a series of interviews with experts and eccentrics ranging from Elon Musk to the folks living in Green Bank, West Virginia, deliberately removed from the world of cellphones and wireless devices.

The now 73-year-old is still as active as ever in filmmaking - he has two films on the shelf and one in the works, "Into the Inferno," an exploration of volcanoes and those who live in proximity to them.



AP

Filmmaker Werner Herzog poses for a portrait to promote the film, "Lo and Behold Reveries of the Connected World", at the Toyota Mirai Music Lodge during the Sundance Film Festival on Sunday, Jan. 24, 2016 in Park City, Utah.

The project has brought him to locations as varied as Ethiopia, Iceland and North Korea, where he had to obtain a special permit and abide by strict restrictions to shoot the volcano he'd set his sights on.

"You have to let them know exactly what you're doing and there are ground rules. And of course apparently they had seen some films of mine." Herzog said. "They know with whom they are dealing."

He recalled one instance where he was filming soldiers taking photos of one another at a resort site. One soldier took a photo of a uniformed woman, who Herzog said was also a soldier He was immediately stopped and told to destroy it. He said he couldn't, but promised not to use the footage.

"They said 'what's your guarantee?' And I said, 'I have three things to offer: my face, my consciousness, and my handshake.' And I shook their hand and they accepted it. ... It was mutual trust."

The film isn't finished yet, but Herzog said he is constantly working.

He has no plans to hit the slopes this year, but he does find himself looking at the alluring lights on the mountain at night.

"You see, I used to ski where there was a full moon and you could see enough," he said. "It's just wonderful."

Gabrielle Union: Who is Stacey Dash?

AP

Gabrielle Union, a cast member in "The Birth of a Nation," poses at the premiere of the film at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival on Monday, Jan. 25, 2016, in Park City, Utah.

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—Actress Gabrielle Union is taking aim at Stacey Dash after the Fox News contributor last week questioned the BET channel's existence.

When asked about Dash's comments at the Sundance Film Festival premiere of "The Birth of a Nation" on Monday, Union first replied, "Who's that? Who's Stacey Dash? Is she like related to Dame Dash? Was she on Roc-A-Fella (Records)?"

Union said the BET Awards remain necessary because of the lack of diversity in mainstream awards.

"The more that we focus on inclusion and a true representation of this country, I think that crazy lady will have less to say," Union said of Dash.

Union has a TV series on BET called "Being Mary Jane."

Dash's comments stemmed from a "Fox & Friends" interview last week when she was asked about the lack of black nominees for Academy Awards. The former "Clueless" star said people need to make up their minds between segregation and integration, "and if we don't want segregation, then we need to get rid of channels like BET and the BET Awards and the (NAACP) Image Awards, where you're only rewarded if you're black."

Dash then wrote on her website that BET lies to American blacks by telling them the rest of America is racist. "And they're absolutely mortified that someone like me—an independent-thinking black woman—dares call their bluff."

Rock has made no decisions on Oscar monologue, says his rep

AP

In this Feb. 27, 2005 file photo, Chris Rock hosts the 77th Academy Awards telecast in Los Angeles. Rock will return to host the Oscars for a second time.

NEW YORK (AP)—A representative for Chris Rock says the Oscar host has made no decisions about his opening monologue.

Rock's publicist Leslie Sloane, in a statement Monday, refuted earlier comments by Academy Awards co-producer Reginald Hudlin that Rock had scraped earlier plans and was rewriting the show following the backlash to the all-white acting nominees.

Sloane said Rock "has made no decisions about the content of the show." She added that "all will be revealed on February 28th."

Rock is yet to comment about the crisis that has surrounded the Academy Awards except for an earlier post on Twitter that referred to the Oscars as "the white BET Awards."

No charges in battery complaint against Chris Brown in Vegas

AP

In this June 7, 2015 file photo, rapper Chris Brown performs at the 2015 Hot 97 Summer Jam at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Authorities in Las Vegas say R&B singer Chris Brown won't be charged with a crime based on a woman's complaint about a New Year's weekend altercation in a casino resort hotel room.

Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson said Monday that he met Wednesday with detectives who investigated the Jan. 2 complaint, and they decided there wasn't enough evidence to seek misdemeanor battery and theft charges.

Police Officer Laura Meltzer characterized the case as suspended.

Police had said the woman complained that Brown hit her and took her cellphone when she tried to snap his photo during a private party in a room at the Palms Casino Resort.

Brown's publicist, Nicole Perna, didn't immediately respond to messages. She had called the woman's account "unequivocally untrue" and a fabrication.

Brown, 26, was in town after performing New Year's Eve at Drai's nightclub at The Cromwell Las Vegas.

He completed five years of felony probation last year after pleading guilty to felony assault in a February 2009 attack on his then-girlfriend Rihanna in Los Angeles.

Publisher rejects criticism of decision to pull slavery book

NEW YORK (AP)—The publisher Scholastic is rejecting criticism by two leading advocates for free expression that it committed self-censorship in halting distribution of a picture book about slavery.

The National Coalition Against Censorship and the PEN American Center last week chided the publisher for pulling "A Birthday Cake for George Washington," which had been widely attacked for its depiction of smiling slaves. NCAC executive director Joan Bertin called the decision "a shocking and unprecedented case of self-censorship."

Scholastic released a statement Monday saying that PEN and the NCAC "apparently did not correctly read" the publisher's initial announcement that it was withdrawing "A Birthday Cake for George Washington."

Divorcing husband wary of wife's online deception

DEAR ABBY: I have been married for 10 years. Four years ago, while waiting for our divorce to be finalized, I decided I'd start dating online and suggested she do the same. We were still friends, so I didn't think it was crossing any boundaries.

My online dating efforts were met with peculiar results. All of the six women I connected with either stood me up or made excuses why they couldn't or wouldn't meet me in person. Out of frustration I began dating my wife again and we canceled the divorce proceedings.

About a year after we got back together, my wife confessed that the women I had reached out to online were all fictitious personae that she had constructed with the intent of exhausting my search efforts. It worked.

We are now filing for divorce again, and I'm worried she may do the same thing. What can I do?

SOUTHERN GUY

DEAR SOUTHERN GUY: Because you think your wife might pull that stunt again, stop sharing any details of your online dating pursuits with her. Definitely refrain from telling her which sites you're using. (Use different ones than before.)

Or, hearken back to the good old days and try meeting people in person. The worst that could happen might be that you encounter your soon-to-be ex in various disguises—but you know her well enough by now that you should be able to see through them.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am engaged to a wonderful man, and we will be married soon. We have been together two years and get along well. His parents live 35 minutes away and his mom doesn't drive.

The other day he commented that she wanted us to invite her over, as she hadn't been over in a year. I told him his mother is always welcome and should just call to make sure we are home. He then proceeded to tell me he wanted her to spend the night. He said that in his previous relationship, his mother would stay over occasionally.

I didn't know what to say, but at the age of 40, should he really be wanting sleepovers? It struck me as odd. I'm a private person and I'm not sure how to resolve this. I don't want him to feel I'm rejecting his mom, but I don't see why she needs to spend the night. I don't want to walk on eggshells with her, because she called and scolded me about how I spoke to her son several months ago. Advice?

LADY OF THE HOUSE

DEAR LADY: Is there something you haven't mentioned? Why has it been a year since your fiance's mother has been invited to visit? Certainly in all this time you could have picked her up. A blanket "come anytime, just call first" isn't a proper invitation—particularly if the person doesn't drive.

If you prefer she not be an overnight guest, I don't think your fiance should force it. And if you prefer that she not meddle in your relationship with her son, I hope you made it clear to her when she "scolded" you. Of course, it wouldn't have happened if her son hadn't tattled to her—which should be a glimpse of what marriage to him may be like if you don't get this straightened out now.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

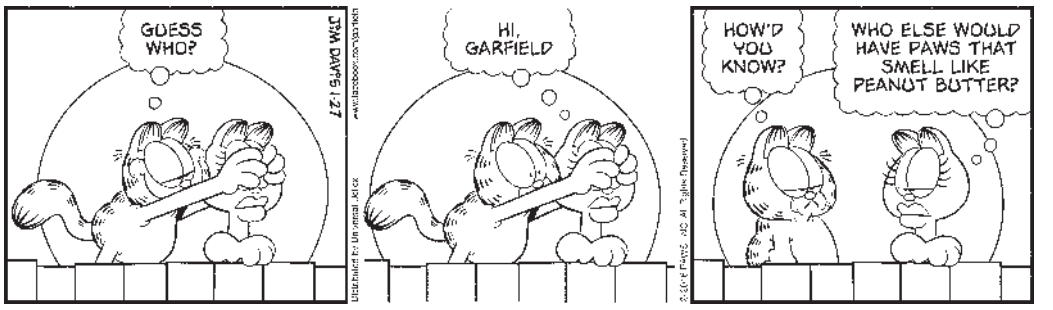
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

THE GIANT SLIMY OCTOPUS OOZES ACROSS THE BEACH.
HIS HIDEOUS PRESENCE TERRORIZES THE SLEEPY WATERFRONT COMMUNITY.
WITH A SUCKER-COVERED TENTACLE, HE GRABS AN UNSUSPECTING TOURIST.
A MUFFLED SCREAM LINGERS IN THE SALTY AIR!
DID YOU WANT SOMETHING, CALVIN?
ACK ICK IG

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

I CALL THIS PIECE "SNOW CANINE #3"
MM. YES.
AND THIS ONE IS "COLD BUG."
VERY NICE. WHIMSICAL.
IS THAT WINE?
CAPRI SUN. A NICE LITTLE 2015 WITH A HEADY BOUQUET

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

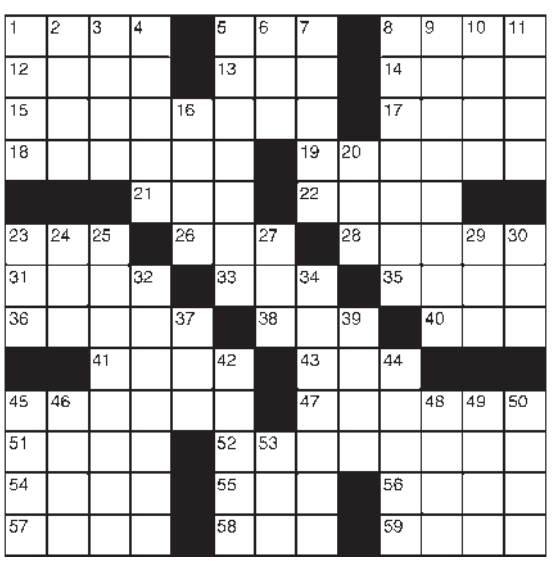
ACROSS
1 Desktop reading light
5 Needlefish
8 Titanic, e.g.
12 Jai —
13 Prefix with meter
14 Hourly pay
15 Canine guard
17 Collar type
18 Vipers
19 Kicks out
21 Behold
22 Author Philip
23 Comic actor DeLuise
26 Crime lab sample
28 Wedding cake layers
31 CEO's "Pronto!"
33 Saharan
35 Sewing case
36 Gold or copper
38 West of "I'm No Angel"
40 Filming location
41 Song-stress Laine
43 Tax prep pro
45 Bumpkins
47 Minor setback
51 Mish-mash
52 Odds-and-ends category
54 Coy eye signal
55 Ripen
56 Genesis twin
57 Long story
58 Reel partner
59 Performed at the Met

DOWN
1 Statutes
2 "Shane" star Ladd
3 — Hari
4 Chooses
5 Blessing
6 Big fuss
7 Film critic Ebert
8 Darling
9 Small axes
10 Gershwin's "— Rhythm"
11 Farm enclosures
16 Obey
20 Scribble
23 Hoover —
24 Sugary suffix
25 Identical, as a set
27 Ulna locale
29 Regret
30 Grab a chair
32 Cartoon boxer Joe
34 Sailed in style
37 Zodiac feline
39 Large-scale
42 Witty Wilde
44 Pines (for)
45 Cries of pain
46 Et — (and others)
48 Havana home
49 — Bator
50 Part of an electric cord
53 In the past

Solution time: 24 mins.

N	U	N	S	■	I	R	A	■	E	T	A	S
A	I	A	I	■	L	C	N	■	I	H	U	E
V	■	V	A	C	I	T	Y	■	H	E	R	E
E	L	Y	■	R	A	H	■	K	N	E	A	D
■	■	■	P	A	D	■	L	E	I	■	■	■
H	O	H	U	M	■	P	E	A	C	O	C	K
A	R	A	B	■	M	I	G	■	I	N	R	E
D	A	H	L	I	A	S	■	S	T	E	I	N
■	■	■	I	R	S	■	F	R	Y	■	■	■
R	O	Y	C	E	■	T	E	T	■	L	A	T
A	L	A	I	■	A	U	D	A	C	I	I	Y
N	E	W	T	■	A	B	U	■	H	E	I	R
T	O	N	Y	■	S	A	F	■	A	U	T	O

Yesterday's answer 1-27



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Patton Oswalt, 47; Alan Cumming, 51; Bridget Fonda, 52; Cris Collinsworth, 57.

Happy Birthday: Consistency and forward motion will help you achieve whatever you set out to do. Size up whatever situation you face and be quick to take action rather than waste time arguing. Actions will speak louder than words, and what you do now will set the stage for years to come. Stay focused on your goals and don't stop until you reach your destination. Your numbers are 7, 12, 20, 26, 34, 39, 45.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't give up on the changes you want to make. A disciplined attitude will help you finish what you started, as well as ease your stress and take your mind off any negative situations you are facing. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Believe in your abilities. Step up to the podium and voice your opinions. Standing up for your beliefs and sharing practical solutions will put you in a good position. Romance is on the rise, and celebrating your success is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Good intentions will not cut it if you don't follow through. Don't let anyone lead you astray with gossip or rumors that aren't based on facts. Emotional concerns about a partner or older person in your life will cause uncertainty. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You'll have plenty of opportunities to mix business with pleasure if you host an event or attend a networking function. Your charming demeanor will attract attention as well as make those you love proud of your accomplishments. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't waste time. Keep the momentum going and head in a direction that promises to bring about positive change. Don't let jealousy turn into a costly loss. Think outside the box and you'll find a workable solution. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Enjoy the youngsters in your life or plan a romantic adventure with someone you are deeply in love with. The attention you pay to others will result in an unexpected, unique response. Plan a vacation around something you find entertaining. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't let anyone put you down or control your life. Make decisions based on what works for you, and if change is required to find the peace you need in your life, take the initiative and make it happen. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Make your home a place for interesting people to gather. Surrounding yourself with eclectic decorations and talented people will allow you to hold court and become a leader. Romance will help stabilize an important relationship. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll face plenty of interference if you are too vocal about what you are up to. Make changes while no one is watching. It's best to avoid people who confuse you or are known to be a poor influence. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't wait to see what everyone else is doing. If you want something, go after it. Don't let a last-minute change of plans alter your course. Follow your heart and your dreams, and head in whatever direction makes you happy. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Helping others will exhaust you. Taking on more than you can handle will result in ill feelings between you and the person counting on you. Make your position clear and don't let yourself be overwhelmed by your problems. Quarreling will not resolve the problem. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Get involved in something that concerns you, or offer support to someone you love. Your gesture will raise your awareness of important issues. Love is highlighted, and a romantic encounter will lead to a brighter future. Make a commitment. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are practical, goal-oriented and proactive. You are intuitive and reliable.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	5	8				2	3	
6			9		2			8
3			1					4
7			5					2
	3	5				9	4	
2			4					6
5			6					3
4			8		7			5
	1	6				4	7	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/27

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	5	3	8	2	9	6	7	1
6	9	1	7	4	5	3	2	8
2	8	7	6	1	3	4	9	5
8	1	2	5	7	6	9	4	3
3	7	5	2	9	4	8	1	6
9	6	4	3	8	1	2	5	7
5	4	8	9	6	7	1	3	2
1	3	6	4	5	2	7	8	9
7	2	9	1	3	8	5	6	4

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/27

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

APP MARKETING PLANS Solution: 9 letters

S	R	O	S	N	O	P	S	P	U	O	R	G	O	H
T	W	I	T	T	E	R	G	S	L	V	T	F	S	C
A	C	S	C	H	A	N	N	E	L	I	F	S	C	T
T	F	I	R	M	O	B	I	L	E	E	A	S	O	I
I	H	C	N	U	A	L	T	A	R	W	A	M	R	P
S	E	T	I	S	E	M	A	S	S	I	V	E	E	S
T	M	Ⓕ	G	A	G	N	R	E	W	A	R	D	S	K
I	I	Ⓡ	D	N	M	N	E	E	S	A	H	P	C	O
C	T	Ⓔ	A	M	I	G	I	R	P	A	L	T	I	O
S	R	Ⓔ	S	U	I	D	O	K	P	A	T	C	T	B
T	R	A	F	F	I	C	N	O	N	E	H	A	Y	E
O	A	N	D	R	O	I	D	E	G	A	R	R	L	C
R	D	A	O	L	N	W	O	D	R	L	R	T	A	A
E	G	N	R	L	B	M	U	T	S	T	E	T	N	F
R	E	G	G	O	L	B	S	K	R	E	P	A	A	E

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Yesterday's Answer: Capillaries

Treasury 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contain 135 puzzles.)

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Additional Requirements: All applicants must be of good health and have a good moral character, must be able to follow grooming standards, must be able to obtain required food handler health certificate, must be able to provide current police clearance, with reliable transportation and must agree to drug test. Can work in flexible hours including weekends and night time. We prefer full time applicants.

Applicants of position listed above are required to have a minimum of 3 months experience.

We are an equal opportunity employer. Qualified applicants will be considered. Applications can be picked up at Kinpachi Japanese Restaurant (MISA Bldg. 1) in Coral Tree Avenue, Garapan. Please no phone calls.

USDA UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Loss Adjuster

The USDA, Farm Service Agency is accepting applications for two (2) Loss Adjuster positions – one (1) on Rota and one (1) on Saipan. Applicants MUST have experience in Tropical Agriculture. A Loss Adjuster is an independent contractor who will visit farms for the purpose of inspecting, measuring, and appraising agricultural crops. A Loss Adjuster will also ensure compliance with acreage and production reporting requirements. Training will be provided. Pay begins at $10.00 per hour for orientation, formal classroom, and on the job training. Pay will increase to $18.00 per hour after successful completion and certification. Authorized travel expenses for training will be paid.

Interested applicants may inquire with the Guam County FSA Office at (671) 300-8550. Completed applications must be submitted by close of business February 8, 2016 to the Guam County FSA Office, 770 E. Sunset Blvd., Suite 265, Barrigada, Guam 96913. Fax: (855) 356-9491.

The Farm Service Agency is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Century Tours, Inc.
is inviting qualified U.S. workers to apply for the following positions:

Two (2) Sales Associate (Part-Time)
High School Diploma or GED. Prior experience in luxury retail sales is preferred including the ability to speak in Chinese (Mandarin)is a plus. Must be proactive, respectful, and a team player. Must be able to lift at least 15 pound items and move up to 50 pound items using a trolley. Must have proven experience in providing in excellent customer service and must be able explain the product options available to customers and make appropriate recommendations. Familiar and able to operate a cash register. Must also be familiar with the Point-Of-Sales (POS) System. Must be able and willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends.

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Interested applicants may send their applications to hr_ctr@tanholdings.com. To be considered, applications must be submitted not later than February 8, 2016. Applications for Employment are available at the Human Resources Department located at the Century Tours Office, Kanoa Resort, Beach Road, in Susupe Village. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

Century Tours is an Equal Opportunity Employer
Qualified Women, Minorities, Veterans and Persons with Disabilities are urged to apply.

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Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 5-day run in both print and online editions, for as low as $30 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

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Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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Serena beats Sharapova, reaches Aussie Open semis

AP

Serena Williams of the United States prepares to serve to Maria Sharapova of Russia during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2016.

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Serena Williams attacked Maria Sharapova's strength and it helped extend her complete domination of their rivalry, earning the six-time Australian Open champion a place in the semifinals.

Top-ranked Williams beat Sharapova 6-4, 6-1 in the quarterfinals on Tuesday, her 18th consecutive victory and 19th in their 21 career meetings back to 2004.

"It was super intense," Williams said of the replay of last year's final. "She's an incredibly intense, focused player who was No. 1 and has won so many Grand Slams for a reason. You have to come out with a lot of fire and intensity."

Each of the six previous times Williams has won a quarterfinal at Melbourne Park, she has won the title at the season-opening Grand Slam tournament.

Up next for her is fourth-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska, who beat No. 10 Carla Suarez Navarro 6-1, 6-3 to reach a Grand Slam semifinal for the fifth time.

Sharapova has won five majors, including the 2008 Australian title, and has been in three other finals at Melbourne Park.

In her fourth-round win against No. 12 Belinda Bencic she had a career-high 21 aces. Against Williams, she had three, and seven double-faults. Williams had 13 aces, three double-faults, hit 31 winners to 11, and broke Sharapova's serve four times.

"She played quite explosive," Sharapova said. "She was really explosive off the return. Yeah."

Sharapova broke to open the match and held for a 2-0 lead. But Williams held in the third game and broke to quickly level at 2-2.

Early in the set, points were short. As it progressed, the rallies got longer, the shrieks and grunts got louder and the emotions were fully on display.

Both players struggled with their ball toss at one end, repeatedly practicing their toss to work out the best position to serve into the sun.

Williams also had to concentrate hard to hold in the ninth game, when a baby screamed loudly in the stands as she faced breakpoints.

She was able to protect her own serve, and go on the attack against Sharapova's. It cost her in the eighth game when she had three break-point chances, taking the high-risk rather than the high-percentage option with her return.

But that approach is what has helped win her 21 major titles, and Williams' aggressive returns finally helped her convert on her fourth set point, following a heavy ground stroke to the net and putting away a volley.

She went on a five-game roll until Sharapova held in the second set, and then finished it off in the seventh game after saving break points.

Williams had medical treatment between sets, and again in the second during a changeover, but it wasn't clear what the problem was. She didn't comment on it in her on-court interview.

Sharapova noted Williams started the opening set with four big serves, so she didn't think it hampered the 34-year-old American's game.

She hasn't beaten Williams since back-to-back victories in 2004, when she led their rivalry 2-1. Despite more than 11 years in between, Sharapova isn't giving up hope of breaking that drought.

LB Davis has surgery, expected to play in Super BowL

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—All-Pro linebacker Thomas Davis had surgery Monday morning on his broken right forearm, but is expected to play in the Super Bowl on Feb. 7.

"My understanding is if everything goes well it is something he can mostly certainly play with," Panthers coach Ron Rivera said Monday. "So we are excited about that possibility."

Rivera did not know which forearm bone Davis broke.

He said the 11-year NFL veteran may need to wear a brace on his arm similar to the one worn by New England Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski.

Davis broke his arm in the second quarter of Carolina's 49-15 win over the Arizona Cardinals on Sunday in the NFC championship. Davis said after the game he fully expected to play in the Super Bowl in about two weeks.

Rivera said if anybody can play through the pain, it would be Davis, who has battled back from three torn ACLs in the same knee to play at an All-Pro level.

"He said (he was going to play) with the same type of sincerity he said to me when he told me he was coming back from the third ACL," Rivera said. "There is something about his conviction and I think that's what makes him who he is today. So I have no doubt that as long as everything continues to heal the way it's supposed to, he'll be out there."

Players were not made available for comment on Monday.

Davis' wife posted an Instagram photo of her husband wearing a hospital shower cap on Monday and thanked well-wishers.

Davis said after the game Sunday he planned to play in the Super Bowl.

"It hurt. It was painful," Davis said Sunday. "At the same time I believe in our training staff and I believe in the process. If it is at all possible I know they are going to get me back and I will do my part to make sure I'm ready."

Davis was dominant early in the NFC title game recording six tackles, including two for losses. He had several jarring hits that set the tone for the Panthers to build a 17-0 lead.

But he broke his forearm while trying to break up a pass in the second quarter and was taken to the locker room for observations. He returned to the sideline in the second half wearing a sling on his right arm.

Even without Davis, the Panthers managed to finish the game with seven takeaways — six of those on defense. They forced Carson Palmer into four interceptions and forced two fumbles in an impressive defensive performance.

When asked what makes him believe he can play with a broken arm, Davis replied, "I believe in me."

"This is something that if it comes down to a pain tolerance and playing through it, I will be there. I guarantee to you."

Davis' teammates praised his toughness and said it's hard to imagine anyone trying to tell him he couldn't play in his first Super Bowl after spending his entire career trying to reach this pinnacle.

"I don't put it past Thomas playing," defensive tackle Kawann Short said. "Three ACLs, broken fingers. It hasn't stopped him before. I think they will have to take all of his jerseys away—all five of them, and even the ones at home."

Rivera said safety Roman Harper is scheduled to see an eye doctor soon after being forced to leave the game on Sunday. The fifth-year coach said he won't have any more information on his status until after the meeting.

The coach also said All-Pro center Ryan Kalil's knee is "fine" after leaving two series in the first half Sunday. Kalil returned in the second half to finish the game.

SIDEBAR

AFC title game draws 2nd-best viewership on record

NEW YORK (AP)—The AFC championship game has drawn its second-largest television audience on record.

The Denver Broncos' down-to-the-wire win over the New England Patriots in what could be the last meeting between Peyton Manning and Tom Brady averaged 53.3 million viewers Sunday on CBS. The network said Monday that trails only the 54.9 million for the 2011 Steelers-Jets matchup, which was played in a later time slot. CBS' records go back to 1978.

With much of the East Coast digging out from a blizzard, it was the perfect day to draw a big audience.

In the NFC matchup, the Panthers and Cardinals don't have the history of the Broncos and Patriots, and the outcome was a rout, leading to the unusual occurrence of the early game getting more viewers than the late one. Carolina's victory averaged 45.7 million viewers, still up from the 42.1 million for New England's blowout of Indianpolis in the late slot a year ago.

Meanwhile, the Denver Broncos have chosen to wear their white road uniforms in Super Bowl 50 against the Carolina Panthers.

It's a simple reason: "We've had Super Bowl success in our white uniforms," said John Elway, who was the Broncos' QB in back-to-back Super Bowl wins in the 1990s and is now their executive VP and general manager.

Denver wore its white uniforms in its last Super Bowl win, 34-19 over Atlanta 17 years ago.

The Broncos went 6-2 on the road in 2015, tying a franchise record for most victories away from home.

The AFC is designated the home team in even years.

The Broncos (14-4) face the Panthers (17-1) on Feb. 7 in their record-tying eighth Super Bowl appearance.

Curry does it all again as Warriors dismantle Spurs

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)— Stephen Curry scored 37 points and hit six 3-pointers in three quarters as the reigning champion Golden State Warriors showed they still rule the West by routing the San Antonio Spurs 120-90 on Monday night.

Curry had 15 points in the opening quarter and shot 12 for 20 in Golden State's 39th straight home win at raucous Oracle Arena, where a star-studded sellout crowd saw a lopsided showdown in what was billed as a potential Western Conference finals preview.

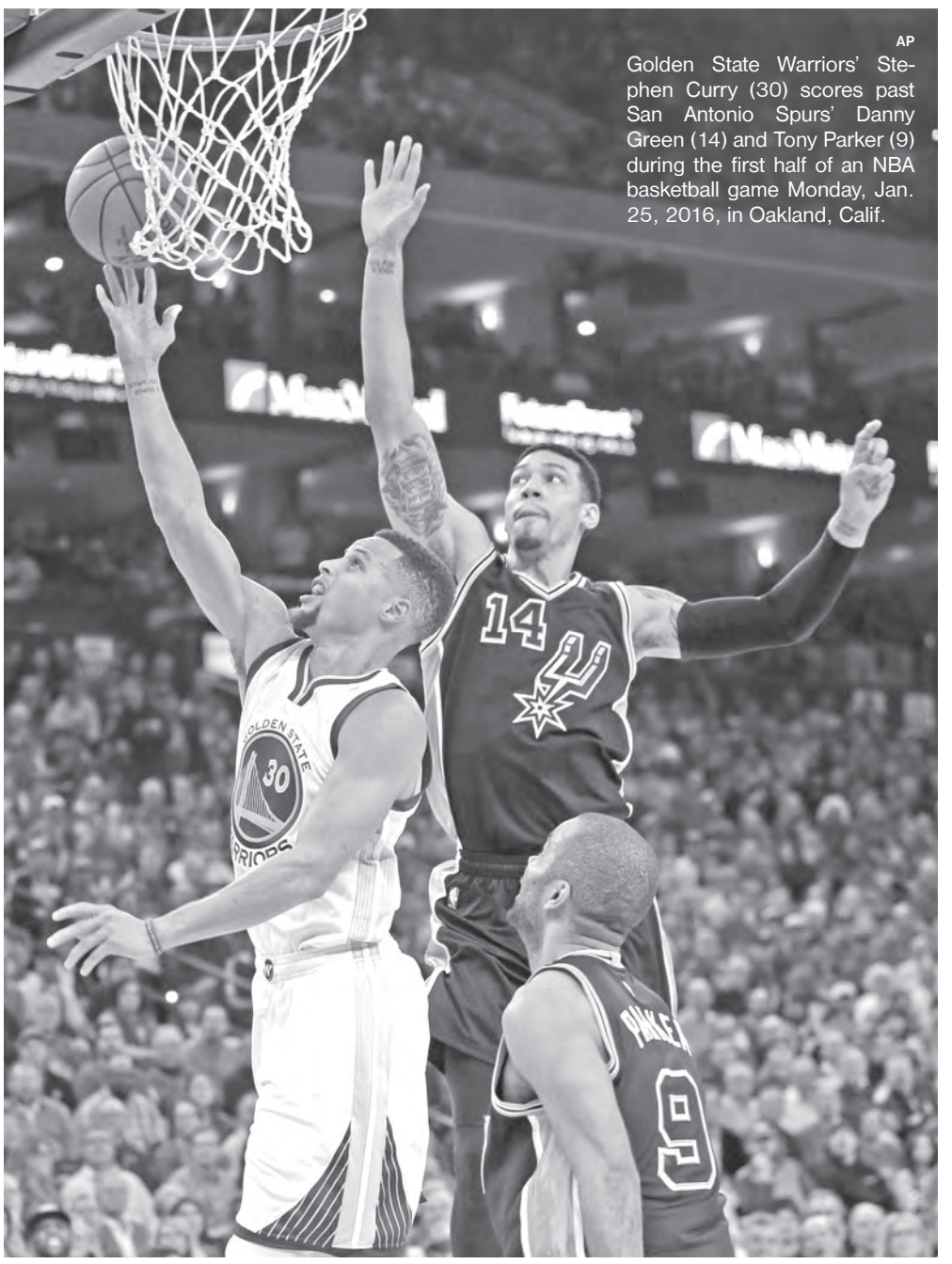
The Warriors (41-4) snapped a 13-game winning streak by the Spurs (38-7), off to the best start in franchise history but without Tim Duncan this time. The teams had the highest combined winning percentage in NBA history by opponents meeting at least 40 games into the season.

Curry galloped down the court and pounded his chest after his second straight 3-pointer and 10th consecutive point put Golden State up 76-56 with 7:55 to go in the third. It was his 1,400th career 3 and he became the 26th player in NBA history to reach that mark.

Chants of "M-V-P!" came from every corner of the arena as Curry did it all for his highest-scoring total in 17 games against San Antonio - knocking down 3s from the baseline and hitting from 30 feet well beyond the arc. Coming off his second triple-double of the season when he banked in a half-court shot Friday against Indiana, the dynamic point guard had three steals early in the game to set the defensive tone. And the Warriors didn't relent after building a 62-47 halftime lead.

All-Star forward Kawhi Leonard scored 16 points for the sloppy Spurs, with Harrison Barnes and Andre Iguodala guarding him early. The Spurs lacked the presence of Duncan, out because of soreness in his right knee.

Even coach Steve Kerr was in disbelief watching his current team thoroughly dismantle his old one on both ends—not to mention his mentor and good friend, Gregg Popovich. Kerr coached his second game back following a long leave of absence dating to Oct. 1 because of complications following two back operations.



AP

Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry (30) scores past San Antonio Spurs' Danny Green (14) and Tony Parker (9) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Monday, Jan. 25, 2016, in Oakland, Calif.

Cavaliers 114, Timberwolves 107

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 25 points and the Cleveland Cavaliers gave Tyronn Lue his first win as head coach with a 114-107 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Monday night.

Cleveland lost to Chicago on Saturday, a day after Lue replaced David Blatt, who was fired on Friday.

The Cavaliers struggled with the Timberwolves before going on a spurt that began late in the third quarter and carried over into the fourth.

Cleveland still had to hold off a run by the Timberwolves, who cut a 15-point lead to 94-91 midway through the fourth. Tristan Thompson scored seven straight points and Matthew Dellavedova hit a 3-pointer, giving Cleveland a 104-91 lead.

Minnesota got within four, but the Cavaliers put the game away at the foul line.

Thompson had 19 points with 12 rebounds, and Dellavedova scored 18 points as Cleveland had six players in double figures.

Rockets 112, Pelicans 111

In New Orleans, James Harden scored 35 points and Trevor Ariza added a season-high 31 to help Houston beat shorthanded New Orleans.

The Pelicans played the second half without All-Star forward Anthony Davis, who left late in the second quarter with a concussion after getting elbowed in the head by teammate Tyreke Evans.

Houston, which did not have center Dwight Howard for the third straight game due to a left ankle sprain, hit a season-best 19 3-pointers. Ariza connected on his first six 3s.

Jrue Holiday scored a season-high 32 points for the Pelicans, adding nine assists and six rebounds. He had a chance to win the game after New Orleans got the ball with 4.7 seconds left following a Houston shot-clock violation. Out of timeouts, the Pelicans had to go the length of the court, and Holiday's contested 35-foot shot at the buzzer did not come close.

Heat 89, Bulls 84

In Chicago, Dwyane Wade had 28 points, Chris Bosh added 18 and Miami rallied from an eight-point deficit early in the fourth quarter to beat Chicago, snapping a four-game losing streak.

Wade scored 10 points in the fourth period. He and Bosh combined for the last five points in the final 1:02 as the Heat snapped an 84-all tie.

Pau Gasol had 19 points and 17 rebounds to lead the Bulls. Jimmy Butler scored 13 on 5-for-15 shooting.

Chicago, coming off a win at Cleveland on Saturday, has dropped three straight home games.

Bulls guard Derrick Rose didn't play in the second half because of lower back and right hamstring injuries.

Celtics 116, Wizards 91

In Washington, pint-sized point guard Isaiah Thomas scored 23 points in three quarters, and five other players finished in double figures as Boston defeated Washington.

The 5-foot-9 Thomas was sinking shots from all over the floor and driving all over the Wizards (20-22) as the Celtics (25-21) won their third straight. He added nine assists and did it all before coach Brad Stevens held him out when the game became lopsided.

Evan Turner had 18 points for the Celtics, who got 13 from Kelly Olynyk and Marcus Smart and 11 from Avery Bradley and Jae Crowder.

John Wall had eight points on 3-of-11 shooting for Washington. Otto Porter returned after missing four games with a sore right hip and scored 15.

Grizzlies 108, Magic 102, OT

In Memphis, Jeff Green scored a season-high 30 points and Memphis defeated slumping Orlando in overtime.

Two free throws by Mike Conley with 15.9 seconds left provided the final margin. The Grizzlies could have put the game away earlier, but converted only four of their first eight free throws in the extra session.

Zach Randolph finished with 18 points and 13 rebounds. Marc Gasol had 17 points, Courtney Lee added 16 and Conley had 12 points and nine assists.

Tobias Harris, Nikola Vucevic and Evan Fournier scored 16 apiece for the Magic, who lost their sixth straight and 10th in 11 games.

Hawks 119, Nuggets 105

In Denver, Paul Millsap scored 22 points, Al Horford had 18 and the Atlanta Hawks completed their Western Conference road trip with a 119-105 win over the Denver Nuggets on Monday night.

Jeff Teague had 12 points and 10 assists for the Hawks, who head home after going 2-2 on their trip. Dennis Schroder added 15 points off the bench.

The Nuggets ended their eight-game homestand at .500 and fell to 9-15 at Pepsi Center this season. Denver started the stretch 2-0, including a win over Golden State, but lost four of its last six.

Will Barton led the Nuggets with 21 points and rookie Nikola Jokic had 15 points and 10 rebounds. Danilo Gallinari and Gary Harris also had 15 points apiece for Denver.

Pistons 95, Jazz 92

In Salt Lake City, Reggie Jackson scored 29 points and the Detroit Pistons never trailed in a 95-92 win over the Utah Jazz on Monday night.

Detroit jumped out to a 20-10 lead in the first quarter and held on the rest of the way. The Pistons had an answer every time Utah pulled close - usually in the form of a basket by Jackson.

Ersan Ilyasova scored 16 points and had eight rebounds for the Pistons. Anthony Tolliver scored 12 and had six rebounds off the bench.

SIDEBAR

Bucks welcome coach Jason Kidd back from hip surgery

ST. FRANCIS, Wis. (AP)— J ason Kidd figures that he will have a higher cellphone bill after getting stuck at home while recuperating from hip surgery.

The Milwaukee Bucks coach would reach out to his staff while the team by sending a lot of text messages.

It's time for Kidd to give those thumbs a rest.

Five weeks after undergoing surgery, Kidd is returning to the bench on Tuesday when the Bucks host the Orlando Magic.

"Unfortunately, the phone bill went up a little bit, but they got the message, and they got the message to the right people," Kidd said Monday after practice.

Maybe his return will give the team the spark needed to jump back into the playoff race. Entering Monday night, Milwaukee was 19-27, in 13th place in the Eastern Conference, five games behind eighth-place Miami.

"Gotta take it one game a time, that starts tomorrow," guard Khris Middleton said.

Kidd is ending 17-game absence from the sideline in his second season in Milwaukee. The Bucks went 8-9 during that stretch under interim coach Joe Prunty, who is Kidd's lead assistant.

The 42-year-old Kidd has gradually worked his way back since the surgery on Dec. 21 to fix a hip that got worn down during his 19-year playing career.

He has watched some home games from the office. He has been at the suburban Milwaukee practice facility when the team is in town, though Monday was his first meeting with the reporters since the surgery.

Kidd got a unique perspective watching games on television.

"Effort" and "energy" have been Bucks buzz words since Kidd arrived in Milwaukee. While Kidd said he liked the effort on the court while away, he is hoping to see more emotion.

More chest bumps during a timeout after a late defensive stop. More high fives after a player makes a clutch 3.

"Wins always bring teams closer together. Championship teams, losses bring teams closer together. For us when we lose, we can't break apart," Kidd said. "As a young group, sometimes you don't understand that."

The team's average age on opening night was 24 years, 144 days. Only Philadelphia had a younger roster (23 years, 66 days).

MLB studying raise of strike zone's bottom

NEW YORK (AP)—Baseball's strike zone could be getting a slight lift.

Major League Baseball is studying whether to raise the bottom of the strike zone from the hollow beneath the kneecap back to the top of the kneecap.

"I'm not in a position to predict whether it's going to happen or not," Rob Manfred said during an interview with The Associated Press on Monday on his first anniversary as baseball commissioner. "I think that the interest in the topic is really driven by the fact that if you look over time there has been a movement down of the strike zone, largely as a result of the way we evaluate the strike zone with umpires."

AP

In this Nov. 19, 2015, file photo, Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred speaks during a news conference after wrapping up the MLB owners meeting, in Dallas. On the anniversary of becoming baseball commissioner, Rob Manfred speaks with the AP and says it is possible the strike zone might be raised to the top of the kneecap.

Strike zone data was included in a presentation given to owners last week at their meeting in Coral Gables, Florida. An agreement with the players' association would be necessary to make a change for this year, and baseball officials said the matter is likely to be discussed during collective bargaining, which would delay any change until 2017.

The strike zone extended to the top of the kneecap through the 1995 season, then was dropped to its current level.

"The umpires have done a great job calling the strike zone as we want it called," Manfred said. "The question is whether we ought to make an adjustment."

Consideration of an alteration comes following a decade-and-a-half decline in offense. There was an uptick during the second half last season.

"The bottom to the top of the knees is only a matter of a couple inches, so it wouldn't be a big adjustment for anybody," San Francisco Giants shortstop Brandon Crawford said in an email. "But, it may help hitters mentally knowing that the zone is a little smaller (even if only by a couple inches). It could help us check off pitches that look like they might be at the bottom of the zone but are sinking even lower."

Without bottom-of-the-zone strikes, pitchers would have to adjust.

"Obviously, raising the strike zone provides more opportunity for hitters to create lift, leading to more doubles and homers, and runs - which probably generates more eyeballs watching the sport," Los Angeles Angels closer Huston Street said in an email.

Meanwhile, the league also discussed the first regular season games in London in 2017.

"We are very interested in playing there, and we're working hard on that one," Manfred said. "I don't think it will be an opener because of the weather issues. It would be later in the season."

Baseball has been looking at the new Olympic Stadium as a possible venue. He wouldn't discuss the possibility of shifting a high-profile matchup to England, such as Yankees-Red Sox.

"We haven't really settled on teams, and I don't want to speculate about that," he said. "Obviously, we want to make as good a first impression in Europe as we possibly can."

MLB also talked about policies on designated hitters.

Manfred said that when he spoke last week of a possible expansion of the designated hitter to the National League, he should have included an emphasis that change is not likely.

"I think the status quo on the DH has served the industry the well," he said. "I think it serves an important purpose in terms of defining the difference between the American League and the National League, and that league definition is important to us from a competitive perspective."

2 teams in tight battle for Thursday billiards crown

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Jokers Homeboyz and National Alamo Car Rental are currently locked in a tight battle for control in the Budweiser-Saipan Basketball Association Open 8-Ball Thursday League.

The Homeboyz and Alamo have alternately occupied the top ranking with the former now holding a slim one-game lead at 71-46 against the 70-47 of the latter.

The Jokers WildBoyz remains within striking distance of the leader at 64-53, while the Wild Bill's Wild Wild West is a far fourth at 54-63. Wild Bill's Rack 'N' Roll (48-69) and the Jonny's Team SCS (44-73) complete the standings.

Alamo would have regained the top spot but could only manage a tight 8-7 win over the Homeboyz in their highly anticipated showdown last week. The Alamo and Homeboyz did not disappoint with the Boyet Sequioco-captained quintet completing the win in the final Partner's 8-Ball match. Joseph Achas and Manny Mariano delivered the final win, breaking the 6-6 tie by beating Nolan Cultura and Rick Elefante.

JON PEREZ

The Jokers Docomo Hustlers, seen here posing for a group photo, are in a good position of claiming one of the Top 3 places in the ongoing Budweiser-Saipan Billiards Association Open 8-Ball Tuesday League. They are currently third behind leaders Jokers IT&E Voyagers and the Jokers Destroyers.

The WildBoyz squeezed out a 7-6 win over the Rack 'N' Roll, while the Wild Wild West scored an 8-5 decision over Team SCS in the other games.

Meanwhile, matches today will have the Alamo facing the Rack 'N' Roll, the Homeboyz taking on the Wild Wild West, and the WildBoyz clashing with Team SCS.

In the Tuesday League, the Jokers IT&E Voyagers continue to enjoy their view from the top with a 101-55 card and are followed by their sister squads Destroyers (81-75) and Docomo Hustlers (78-78) at second and third spots.

The Jonny's Titans and the StraightBlackBall, another Jokers-backed squad, are tied at 73-83, while the Jonny's Crazy 8 bring up the rear at 62-94,

The Voyagers and the Destroyers both completed 8-5 wins over the Titans and the StraightBlackBall, while the Hustlers pulled off a 9-4 triumph against the Crazy 8.

The Destroyers were playing against the Hustlers at press time so were the Voyagers against the StraighBlackBall and the Crazy 8 over the Titans.

ACE

From Page 28

ley's Coffee Shop (1-1) in last weekend's curtain-raiser. Ace Hardware also moved up to a 2-0 mark to join Mobil/JP World in the early lead after whipping GPPC (1-1), 82-55, in the second match.

Both Ace Hardware and Mobil/JP World played better in the second half to cruise to victory.

Ace Hardware was only up by 8 at halftime, 38-30, before taking a baker's dozen lead after the third period, 55-42. Sidney Quan led Ace's third-quarter assault, scoring 8 straight markers midway in that period.

Then in the final canto, Jethro Cruz closed out for Ace, knocking in the team's last 8 markers, including a banked triple in the closing seconds of the match.

Cruz went on to top-score for Ace Hardware with his 19 points. Four other Ace Hardware players finished in double figures with Don Brennan adding 15, Quan chipping in 14, and Daniel Camacho and Keoni Chariton contributing 10 apiece.

Randy Mungcal paced GPPC with his 20 markers.

In the first game, Mobil/JP turned a 47-35 halftime edge to a 70-56 advantage , thanks to Elgene Mangali's 9 markers and ample support from his teammates in the third quarter.

Shirley's behind Rabasto's triples managed to cut the deficit to single digit in the fourth period, but still fell short in the end as Ignacio Borja and Lerio Pagarao delivered timely baskets for Mobil/JP World to keep their safe distance.

First Game

Mobil 85 —Borja 19, Mangali 13, Pagarao 10, Camacho 9, Liles 7, Ferrer 7, Villacrusis 6, Paraiso 5, Cortez 3.

Shirley's 76—Rabasto 17, De Guzman 15, Pollisco 13, Usi 12, Dela Rosa 9, Pamintuan 4, Drilon 3.

Scoring by quarters: 21-18, 35-47, 70-56, 85-76.

Second Game

Ace 82 —Cruz 19, Brennan 15, Quan 14, Camacho 10, Chariton 10, Ong 6, Younis 6.

GPPC 55— Mungcal 20, Ocampo 14, Laguindam, Tagle 6, Sampang 4, Salgatar 3, Barron 2.

Scoring by quarters: 18-14, 38-30, 55-42, 82-55.

'PIKABOO'

From Page 28

last month. He lost to Japanese Yutaro Muramoto via unanimous decision in PXC 50 last Dec. 4.

The defeat was Shane's third against 11 wins and his second in six appearances in PXC. He won his first PXC fights, prevailing against Tony Reyes in PXC 38 last Aug. 9, 2013 via unanimous decision; topping Rodel Orais (Kimura hold) in PXC 41 last Nov. 9, 2013; and downing Jay Tenorio (split decision) in PXC 42 last Feb. 28, 2014.

The son of Trench Tech founder and president Cuki Alvarez then absorbed his first loss at the hands of Darrne Uyenoyama (TKO/punches) in PXC 45 last Oct. 24, 2014 before recovering in PXC 49 in August last year after beating Jessie Rafols via rear-naked choke at the 3:46 mark of the opening round.

Urrutia, who is from Miami, Florida, also dropped his recent match against the Philippines' Ernie Braca (split decision) in PXC 51 held last Jan. 16 this year. The 29-year-old Urrutia has a 7-3 record, winning three straight bouts before bowing to Braca. He weighs 143lbs and an inch shorter than Shane, standing at 5'8".

"He is a strong wrestler so I need to keep him away with my striking and movement and sprawl hard on his takedowns," Shane said.

CNMI and Guam Trailing Pools Friendly

PHOTOS By GUAM FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

CNMI training pool players and coaches pose with game officials before their match against Guam's U14/U16 training pool early this month at the GFA National Training Center in Dededo.

The CNMI's Carla Ballesteros catches the ball.

The CNMI's Angelica Sally, second left, beats a Guam player for the ball.

The CNMI's Katrina Costales, right, tries to kick the ball ahead of a Guam player.

The CNMI's Gillian Villagomez dribbles away from two Guam defenders.

The CNMI's Britany Wally dribbles in front of a Guam defender.

Guam U14/U16 training pool players and coaches have their photo taken with game officials.

The CNMI's Jerlyn Castillo scans the pitch before making a pass.

The CNMI's Krisel Tuazon, right, and Britany Wally plays defense against a Guam player.

Serena beats Sharapova, reaches Aussie Open semis

PAGE 24

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Curry does it all again as Warriors dismantle Spurs

PAGE 25

'Pikaboo' preps for 7th PXC fight

PACIFIC XTREME COMBAT

Trench Tech's Shane "Pikaboo" Alvarez tries to lock down the arm of Japanese Yutaro Muramoto during their bout in PXC 50 last month at the University of Guam Fieldhouse.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Trench Tech's Shane "Pikaboo" Alvarez leaves for the Philippines today to attend a training camp and prepare for his first fight of the year.

"We will be in Manila at the Penalosa Boxing Gym for mitts and regular training and then we will also go to the Elorde Sports Center where a lot of champions go to spar," said Shane, who will be joined by his cousin Roman in the training camp.

Alvarez needs all the training he could get in the Philippines and here on Saipan as he will be facing a tough opponent in Emilio Urrutia in PXC 52 at the University of Guam Fieldhouse.

"We will be training under coach Carl Penalosa. Our Korean friend Michael Park has been living in the Philippines for a few years now and he is a friend of coach Carl. We want to get good quality sparring and critique our techniques in boxing and kickboxing," said Shane, who will be fighting back at the bantamweight class (135lbs).

"I moved back up to 135 so I should be the faster fighter though he (Urrutia) may be a bit stronger. We will be in the Philippines for two and a half weeks then it's back here to finish our last month of training and work on my strength," he added.

Shane hopes to start the year on a winning note after dropping his season-ending fight

See 'PIKABOO' on Page 26

Ace Hardware, Mobil/JP World get victory No. 2

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Ace Hardware and Mobil/JP World earned their second straight win after prevailing in their respective games in the 2016 Emon Lodge No. 179 Brotherhood/IT&E Basketball League last Sunday at the Civic Center Basketball Court.

Mobil/JP World, which won the league's opener last Jan. 3 with a 94-74 rout of MJD Enterprises, made it two in a row following an 85-76 triumph against Shir-

See ACE on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Ace Hardware's Brady Hammond blocks GPPC's Gerald Laguimdam during the fourth quarter of their game in the Emon Lodge caging last Sunday at the Civic Center Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Joeten's Alex Lauron is doubled team by Tan Holdings' Jarett Matsutaro, left, and Adrian Palacios during Game 1 of their title series in the JP World caging this month at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Joeten players haul awards in JP World caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Joeten players collected five individual awards in the recently concluded 2nd JP World Corp. Customer Appreciation Basketball League.

Dixon Kwon led the list of Joeten players awardees as he took home the regular season MVP trophy and was also named to the Mythical Five selection. Joining Kwon on the elite group was teammate Alex Lauron, while Elmer Esdrelon of champion Tan Holdings, MBI/KFC' Ivan Devero, and McDonald's McClain Achas complete the selection.

Other Joeten players who received individual trophies during the league's awards ceremony last Wednesday before Game 2 of the finals series were Juanito Sambile and Steven Rasa. Sambile led the league in steals, while Steve Rasa topped the rebounds department.

Saipan Ice & Water's Treat Kaipat won the Best in Assists award, Docomo's Robert Sanciangco ruled the 3-point category, and Mariana Resort's Fred Litulumar reigned supreme in the blocks department. Two more individual awards were presented with McDonald's Gil Gapor winning the Best Defensive Player plum and James Benavente of Commonwealth Utilities Corp. bringing home the Best in Sportsmanship trophy.

The Sportsmanship Award in the team category went to Top Development, Inc.

Mobil's Sergio Alves, Tom Anitok and Jennifer Duenas handed the awards to the players and teams.

The second edition of the JP World caging featured nine teams with Tan Holdings winning the championship after edging Joeten in the best-of-three title series, 2-1. Tan Holdings took Game 1, 84-68, while Joeten prevailed in Game 2, 84-82, to force a rubber, which the former won, 86-80.

Esdrelon was named as Finals MVP after scoring 23 points in Game 3.